

K. L. A.

THE
BOOK of PROPHECY opened:
OR, A
PLAIN DISCOVERY
OF THE
HIDDEN TREASURE
OF
WISDOM and KNOWLEDGE,
CONTAINED
IN THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS:

Where the Fulness of CHRIST, and the Glory of his Kingdom, are, by Degrees, made manifest in the opening of the Seals, and gradually carried on from the Resurrection of CHRIST, until the Restoration of the JEWS, when the Vail shall be taken off their Hearts, in the finishing of the Mystery of GOD.

Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto Treasure hid in a Field, the which when a Man hath found, he hideth, and for Joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that Field. Matt. xiii. 44.

And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God; for verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this Mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the Sea, and shall not doubt in his Heart, but shall believe that those Things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Mark xi. 22, 23.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the AUTHOR, and sold by G. KEITH, in Grace-Church-Street; ALEX. HOGG, No. 16, Pater-noster-Row; and J. MATHEWS, No. 18, in the Strand, 1779.

TO THE
CHRISTIAN READER.

HAD it not been for the help I found in Christ, the peace and joy I found in believing his word, which say, that all things are possible to him that believeth, I should certainly have thought of saving myself much needless trouble, and not have written so much on a subject that might well be thought out of the reach of my ability, as would be to me to fly above the clouds, or hold out an exceeding great mountain in my small and feeble arms; but things that are impossible with men, is possible with God; for it is as easy with God to enable those that believe in his name to carry mountains in their arms, as to remove mountains out of their places; a power which is promised to a believer that hath faith as a grain of mustard-seed. And

iv To the CHRISTIAN READER.

whatever way the meaning of these words be taken, whether they relate to the mountains of errors, or the mountains of men's persuasions, or in plain words, the mountains of the earth, it is all one as to the subject in hand, since all things are possible to him that believeth.

Had it not been, I say, for this my belief and faith in God, I should think it very vain in me to attempt to demonstrate a matter, which the most learned never yet sufficiently could comprehend; but I hope the reader will not think by this, that I want to exalt myself above my superiors, the reverend divines of our church, whose business it is to explain the scriptures; nay, the Lord knows that I am far from entertaining the thoughts of making myself equal, no, not worthy to be compared with the least of them; for although I have attempted to expound the most mysterious passages of scripture, yet, it was not because I thought myself sufficiently qualified for such a work, (that would be ridiculous) but because I believe, though I be nothing, I can do all things through Christ strengthening me; for through weakness is his power and wisdom made manifest; and, if in any thing I come short requisite to be performed on my part, I have nothing

To the CHRISTIAN READER. v

thing to blame for it, but the sins of my own omission; seeing that all things are possible to him that believeth.

Nevertheless, I desire no man to believe me, nor regard my words without further proof; a man's work will soon discover what manner of man he is; and if the reverend clergy would think the perusing of this worth their while, I would very willingly hear what they have to say, either for or against it, and be ready at any time to give an answer or a reason to them of the hope that is in me: if there be any thing through the whole, contrary to sound doctrine, or prejudicial to the known principles of the Christian faith, as already received in the reformed churches; or, if the subject matter of the discourse tend to satisfy people's curiosity more than for the use of edifying, I would not have them pay any regard to it: but if on the other hand it be found that dark passages of holy writ are in some measure made intelligibly clear, the meaning of metaphorical expressions set forth in their own proper light, by comparing scripture to scripture, and the whole series verified and confirmed by many convincing evidences; and if it belongs to a layman to search the scriptures, as the most learned

vi To the CHRISTIAN READER.

and best qualified divines of the protestant persuasion hitherto have always acknowledged; then surely, every good Christian will readily confess, that it would be a sin in me to suffer this my candle always to remain under a bushel, lest I should with the slothful servant be guilty of hiding my talent in the earth, and slight that command of my blessed Saviour, who taught his disciples, to let their light shine before men, that others might see the work, that our Father which is in heaven might be glorified.

OBJ. We are not now to look for an extraordinary revelation?

Ans. Why? what warrant have any person to say so? Not a word in all the holy scriptures do favour such a conceit, although it be a common saying among men touching these matters, nothing is more plain, nor more frequently mentioned both in the Old and New Testaments, than that the bringing in of the body of the Jews into the Christian faith are to be by an extraordinary revelation, when the time comes that the kingdom shall be restored again to Israel; when the promise of the Father shall have its due accomplishment, in causing all nations and kingdoms to bow and submit to the Mediator's kingdom; when

To the CHRISTIAN READER. vii

when Christ's dominion shall extend from sea to sea, even unto all the ends of the earth; when the state of the church on earth shall be most pure; when the knowledge of the Lord shall overflow the earth, as the waters cover the sea; when peace and truth shall faithfully be maintained and preserved, by all ranks and degrees of persons; when all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of Christ; when both Jews and Gentiles shall be united, stand up as one man promoting the faith of Jesus, and follow the Lamb whither so ever he goeth;—and all these glorious days of the Son of man shall surely come to pass in its time, which we are both to look for, and earnestly are to wish and pray for the hastening of it: and to doubt of the accomplishment of these great truths, or say that they may have their fulfillment without an extraordinary revelation, is contrary to the whole tenor of scripture; and it may also be made clear from scripture, that before this happy state promised to the church shall be established, Mystery, Babylon the Great, shall have its final dissolution, and that man of sin shall be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming, 1 *Thess.* ii. 19. And to shew that the glorious coming of Christ's king-

viii To the CHRISTIAN READER.

dom on earth is that brightness of his coming the apostle Paul here means, I have for this purpose composed the following remarks, where I have considered the nature of the seven sealed book, where the fulness of Christ, and the glory of his kingdom are by degrees made manifest in the opening of the seals, and gradually carried on, from the resurrection of Christ, until the restoration of the Jews, when the vail shall be taken off their heart, in the finishing of the mystery of God.

This we are well assured of from scripture testimonies, that the body of the Jews shall in due time be brought into the saving knowledge of the truth, as it is in Christ; and that our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep will bring them into his sheepfold, as that one part of his sheep that go astray is clear, *John* x. 16. *Rom.* xi. 26, 27, 28. But this bringing in of the Jews into the Christian faith, is not to be effected in the ordinary way, especially as long as the Christians are so much divided amongst themselves, which I am sure is one great cause of their continuance so long in unbelief; nor can it be thought that these glorious days spoken of at their conversion, particularly that of the
church

To the CHRISTIAN READER. ix

church triumphing over Mystery Babylon, will ever come to pass until these mysterious parts of scripture which yet appear like a sealed book, be more fully opened and cleared-up, that so men of different capacities may plainly perceive and understand the whole council of God, as it is revealed in his word. And as all the scripture is profitable to make the man of God perfect, *2 Tim.* iii. 16, 17. we are therefore taught by this plain passage of holy writ, that it is a duty incumbent upon every good Christian to desire to know, and in some measure seek to understand every part of the holy scripture, that he may be profited thereby. What a pity it is, that so many of my Christian brethren that acknowledge the books of the Old and New Testaments to be given by the inspiration of God, at the same time look on a great part of these sacred records like as many empty cyphers placed in an accompt book, for no use at all, (as some say) but to vex and perplex the mind of the diligent peruser, as if the mysterious parts were to us wholly useless, or, as if it was in vain for God to reveal his will unto us through a glass darkly.

Now, because I believe there are many serious, well-meaning Christians that think it presumptuous

x To the CHRISTIAN READER.

uous to enquire into the knowledge of dark parts of scripture, because it is said by the prophet Daniel, that these things are closed-up and sealed till the time of the end; which time of the end they think is not to commence until the end of all time, that is, until the last general judgment; although it is clear enough that this time of the end that the prophet means, is the time when all types and shadows that were under the law of Moses had an end in the bringing in of the anti-types under the gospel dispensation; which things were fulfilled, and by degrees made manifest, in the opening the book with seven seals. And for any to deny or doubt whether any of the seals be yet opened, would be to deny or doubt whether Christ be yet risen from the dead; and for any to deny or doubt of that, would be to reject Christianity itself.

I am persuaded, that if men were come to believe, and know more of these great truths held forth to us in dark parts of scripture, which the greatest part of my Christian brethren seem to be much in the dark, there would be less of that spirit of division amongst us, by which charity, or Christian brotherly love, have waxed cold. To what purpose was it for the apostle to exhort
his

To the CHRISTIAN READER. xi

his Christian brethren not to remain ignorant of the blindness, in part which happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: was it not lest they should be wise in their own conceit? *Rom. xi. 25.* And doth not this ignorance of the mystery remain among the wise men of our day, in not considering the manner how God verifies his word in the accomplishment of scripture prophecies? For this cause, I have viewed the circumstantial parts of religion, as well as the substantials thereof, in the manner they are found both in the Old and New Testaments, comparing them both together, where I have endeavoured, (as it comes in course,) to shew the connection between the types and their anti-types, answering face to face from the law and the prophets, until the coming of Christ: and again, from the resurrection of Christ until the restoration of the Jews, the end of all prophetic visions; where we may behold, with the apostle, with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord, shining throughout every part of the sacred records, whereby the word of God is magnified,
his

xii To the CHRISTIAN READER.

his promises verified, and the evidence of things not seen, which is the principles of our faith, grow stronger and stronger, until at length faith itself is swallowed up in a vision of the glorious perfection of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ.

A. C.

7 DE61

A

A PLAIN

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

of the book of the Revelation

AND I saw in the right-hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and on the back-side, sealed with seven seals: And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?—And no man in heaven, nor on earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon: And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open, and to read the book, neither to look thereon: And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David,

David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

In order to understand the meaning of these metaphorical expressions, it will be necessary, 1. To form such an idea of them, as the words themselves naturally bear; for, to be covetous in humouring our own fancies, by compelling the natural sway of any scripture text to suit our opinion, would be to judge partially; by which we are in eminent danger of making wrong applications, for it is easy to give a meaning to words, but it is all the matter to give the right meaning and make that appear undeniable. There is a way to clear truth by the truth, that is, by comparing scripture to scripture, which is the word of truth by which we are sanctified, *John* xvii. 17. And there is another way to judge truth by falsehood, and this, by putting such constructions on scripture texts, as will by no means carry with it such a distinguished mark as may appear conformed to the whole tenor of scripture. For want of considering and meditating on the holy scriptures in this light, men are forced, in their expounding the word of God, to take one part of the holy scriptures as a tool to break the rest, to persist to the end that there might be room to establish a persuasion that would at length overthrow our dependance on the word of truth, given to us as a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths. The former way is easy and pleasant to every regenerate person; the latter is difficult, because it cannot be done without a share

a share of the subtilty of the old serpent, the devil, who is always for diminishing the authority of the holy scriptures. For the ways of true wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; her mouth speaketh truth, and wickedness is an abomination to her lips; all the words of her mouth are in righteousness, there is nothing froward or perverse in them, they are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge, *Prov. viii. 7, 8, 9.*

Now, considering the book John saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, which book, as is said, was all written within, but on the backside it was sealed with seven seals.

These or the like expressions must not be taken literally, because God have no need of books in his hand, as is customary among men to help their memory in order to carry on trade, or put in record things of consequence; for, to imagine any weakness in God to need such help would be to slight his glorious perfections. And therefore this book, which was sealed in his hand, means something else than a meer book; and as God is a spirit, *John iv. 24.* we are not to think he hath bodily parts, such as hands, feet, eyes, &c. as is oftentimes represented in scripture; and therefore when we speak of hands, feet, or eyes, to God, we are to understand his almighty power, holiness, justice, and unfearchable understanding; and hereby God is to be seen with the eye of faith on his throne, ruling all things in heaven and on earth.

Various are the opinions of people concerning this book, but I shall only mention two different opinions people have of it, and after considering their assertions according to the rules of right reason, in the language of scripture, I shall plainly shew my real sentiments thereupon.

There are some that are of the opinion that the book with seven seals is the book of God's decrees, touching the salvation of lost sinners, where the covenant of grace through a Redeemer were made, in which God have chosen all them that should be saved before the foundation of the world, and the means also were fore ordained by which all the elect are justified, adopted, and sanctified. And the book being sealed with seven seals is thought to be the secrecy of God's counsel and determination before conversion, or before the time of their effectual calling. But it is evident that the book of God's decrees, as is here described, is not that book which John saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, sealed with seven seals, for John wept much because no man in heaven nor on earth, neither under the earth, was found neither able nor worthy to open the seals thereof, which would be a great sin for the apostle, not only to desire to know what is expressly forbidden, (the secret decrees of God) but also would be contrary to his own character to express himself in such a manner without reflecting on his own conduct: for secret things belong unto the Lord, but things that are revealed belong unto us.

Others

Others again assert, that the book with seven seals is the word of God contained in the holy scriptures, wherein all the promises of God to the penitent are put on record, and the will of God, for the salvation of lost sinners, there revealed. But it is a sealed book to all unregenerate persons, and, as it is said, that no man in heaven, nor on earth, neither under the earth, was found neither able nor worthy to open the seals thereof, save only the Lion of the tribe of Juda, as much as to say, that it is through the merit and mediation of a Redeemer, that all the promises of God are verified and made good to sinners upon their accepting of the same, as it is offered in the gospel: but no man is able to read or understand the spiritual meaning of this book, nor perceive the glory of God that is revealed therein, nor be able to lay hold on these precious promises that are written within, until first the eyes of his understanding be opened or enlightened, and his heart renewed by the Spirit of Christ, which is done in his effectual calling, and then the first seal of the book is opened to him by the power of Christ in his regeneration, and so the other seals are opened to him by degrees, as he grows in grace, till he arrives at the fulness of stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

It is true that the holy scriptures is as a sealed book to every unconverted person, whether any of them be learned to know the letter or not; for it must be allowed, that no man is able to read

or understand the meaning of parabolical expressions found written therein, nor perceive the glory of God that is there revealed, nor be able by faith to lay hold of the promises which are written within this sacred volume, until first the eyes of his understanding be enlightened, and his heart renewed in part by the power of Christ. But it would be a difficult matter to apply the opening of the seals (in the order they are described, and in the manner as they ought to be understood) to the different cases and various circumstances of every believer, from the time he first believes until he is made perfect in a state of glory; but if we consider this book as peculiarly applicable, and as it stands more nearly connected with the state and various circumstances of the whole church of God in general, both while under the shadow of the law and the substance under the gospel, and at the same time observing the connection between the types and their anti-types, we shall find throughout the whole a beautiful harmony of concurring circumstances by which plain truths revealed, that have been under a cloud, are brought to light, as the sun shining in his strength.

It is evident that this book with seven seals is the book of prophecy, containing all the prophecies which the prophets of old have foretold concerning the glory of the Messiah's kingdom, for it is the same book which the prophet Daniel, chap. xii. was ordered to shut up, and to seal it even to the time of the end. Now it cannot

cannot be that this book with seven seals is the whole revealed will of God found written in the holy scriptures, because there are many moral precepts, both in the Old and New Testaments, that have been understood, received, and highly esteemed by many heathen philosophers (which I may venture to warrant) as much as any Christian believer ever yet could discover to the world; but it is said that no man in heaven, nor on earth, neither under the earth, was found neither able nor worthy to open or to read the book, save only the Lion of the tribe of Juda, which is Christ; a plain evidence to hold for an argument that the things contained in this book were concerning the glory of Christ's kingdom, which was totally hid while the book was sealed with seven seals, but was to be made manifest in the accomplishment of scripture prophecies; and this is as they are or were to be fulfilled in Christ under the gospel dispensation: and so the opening of the seals must be the fulfilment or the accomplishment of scripture prophecies, answerable to the state and various circumstances of the whole church in general, from the resurrection of Christ until the restoration of the Jews, when the vail shall be taken off their hearts in the finishing of the mystery of God. And as John saw this book in God's right hand before it was opened, we may learn from thence, first, That the things that were written within the book were remarkably hid from himself, even after he was called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ; secondly, And that

the things written within were highly esteemed in the sight of God, and were matters of the highest importance, and of the greatest concern to the Christian church. But that no event have yet appeared by which the glory of Christ's kingdom should be made manifest until it appeared by degrees in the opening of the seals, so by the opening of the seals we are to understand some special events for manifesting forth the glory of the Mediator's kingdom. And as the whole fabrick of the universe was made manifest by degrees, in seven days in one week, whereby God made all things out of nothing by the word of his almighty power, likewise the glory of the Mediator's kingdom shall be made manifest in the opening of the seals; and when the seven seals are opened in the accomplishment of scripture prophecies, then the new creation formed by God's essential word, who was from the beginning with God, and was God, shall appear in its meridian brightness.

The strong angel that proclaimed these things, saying, Who is worthy to open the book, &c. is not literally to be understood an angel of God sent from heaven, for to proclaim with a loud voice is to declare openly before all; but we never read that any of these ministering spirits (the holy angels of God in heaven), were sent forth to reveal any part of the will of God to man but in a private manner, and this to some only, not to all. Some, perhaps, will say, that the strong angel here spoken of, is our Saviour Christ himself,

self, because he is in scripture represented as the angel of the covenant, who came from heaven to declare openly the will of his Father to the children of men; but this was at a certain period of time, when the same Christ was suffering and dying for our sins, and when his blessed body was laid in the grave, after it was dead and buried, as shall in course be made clear. But by the strong angel here spoken of, we are to understand the joint testimony of all the apostles who were now (especially at that juncture of time), deeply sensible of their own unworthiness to merit any favour at the hand of God, but to look for it in the way of mercy and free grace. They confessed that none could be found amongst the sons of men, no not of the angels of God in heaven, able to give the least satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of the world; nor amongst these could there be found so much as one worthy to approach into God's presence, in order to reveal his work, his strange work, even the work of man's redemption, through a Redeemer, which the prophets of old prophesied of, and which at the death of Christ, by all human appearance, seemed wholly extinguished. Now, to make the whole of this method of exposing the words appear true, we are to understand every thing spoken of heaven, and of earth, and of angels, in this book of Revelation, are figurative expressions, which chiefly relates to the state and circumstances of the church of God on earth; for it is plain, that not only the joint testimony of

men, but men themselves are called angels in this book, particularly that angel that would not be worshipped, which John thought was Christ himself, until the same angel declared to him, that he was only his fellow-servant, and of his brethren that have the testimony of Jesus, chap. xix. 10. and xxi. 8. It is evident also, that the joint testimony of men, (I mean a declaration of God's will by men in the accomplishment of scripture prophecies), are called angels; for what can be said of the seven angels with seven trumpets and seven vials, also the seven angels of the seven churches of Asia, and the four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, &c. surely they are not literally to be understood of the holy angels of God in heaven, because some of them were evil angels, as appears by the manner of their operation, and by the manner how they were commissioned to exercise their authority; neither can it be said that these angels were a distinct number, or as many certain persons, for this would be contrary both to reason and scripture evidences; therefore they are to be understood as instruments of providence, whereby all the prophecies in scripture are fulfilled in Christ, under the gospel dispensation.

Next we have an account of John's excessive grief, he wept much, why?—it was because no man was found able nor worthy to open the book. By this it seems that the apostle was cast almost into the pit of distraction, being overwhelmed in doubts and fears, and began to despair of ever seeing

seeing the book opened, even by Christ himself; this certainly was the cause of his weeping much, for it cannot be that he should lament so much because it was not in the power of any creature to open the book, (the same as to undertake the work, and disclose the mystery of human redemption) to lament much for this, is very far from being a duty of any wise man, and far less for an apostle of Jesus Christ, who certainly knew better than to weep much, because it was not in the power of any creature to undertake and carry on a work which no less than the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, was able to perform.

It is plain, therefore, that the cause of John weeping much, is the great trial put upon him and the other apostles, by the hard dispensation of these times, which could not but fill their hearts with excessive grief; and this will appear true, if we consider their circumstance at that time, when their Lord and Master was taken from them, first betrayed by one of themselves, a fellow disciple, and accused of the high priest for speaking blasphemy, when the false witnesses arose against him to cause him to be put to death; during which time of Christ's suffering for our sins, it is said that all the disciples forsook him and fled; no man can deny but that John (with all the other apostles) had good cause to weep much, considering the way how they were situated, although they a little before trusted that it had been he that should redeem Israel out of

his trouble ; they now come to see that they themselves were more and more involved in crosses, without any visible appearance of any way to escape the fury of the Jews, and the woeful contempt of every hard-hearted unbeliever, and the more so if they still would go on in owning a crucified Saviour, and they every way exposed to a world lying in wickedness, being eye-witnesses to the manner how their Lord was put to death, how he was handled with the utmost violence, scorn and contempt, and they themselves who were his disciples well known amongst the people, expecting no better treatment, but to be handled in the same manner ; it cannot be supposed but that they were in great jeopardy of sinking by the overflowing floods and raging waves of the power of darkness, which at that time so remarkably prevailed ; which indeed was an extraordinary trial, in so much that they were exceedingly in danger of making shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience.

But the Lord himself would not suffer their faith totally to fail them, nor their hope totally to perish, but at the very time of their excessive grief sends help in time of need, with the comfortable news that their Lord was risen from the dead, according to the scriptures ; and this we have by the report of one of the elders, who said, weep not, behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. In these words we have a summary description

tion of the glad tidings of joy and consolation first brought to the disciples concerning the resurrection of Christ, as it is said by the disciples themselves in their discourse one to another, the Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon, &c. *Luke xxiv. 34.* This leads us to the belief (as it is more than probable) that Simon Peter, one of the apostles, was the first man our Lord appeared to after his resurrection, and consequently the first that confirmed the truth of what was said by the women, who rehearsed what was told them by the two angels, who said to them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? chap. xxiv. 5. It is plain, therefore, that that testimony of Peter in confirming the truth of Christ's resurrection, and as a faithful witness to that glorious event is, that one of the elders which is here spoken of, that said to *John*, weep not, behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. By the declaration of the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, it is evident that our Lord sprang from the tribe of Juda, descended of the house or family of David, as he was man, or the son of man, to rule and reign forever as king, sitting on David's throne, and for this he is called the Root of David, because he is his Lord, as well as his son, and therefore God as well as man, yet but one Christ, which is a question put to the Pharisees by Christ himself, that they could not answer; saying,

saying, what think ye of Christ, whose son is he? they say unto him, the son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy foot-stool? if David then call him Lord, how is he is son? and no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man (from that day forth) ask him any more questions, *Matt. xxii. 42—46.*

Behold this Lion of the tribe of Juda, which is Christ, hath prevailed to open the book, &c. that is to say, behold Christ, who is king of saints, hath conquered death and the grave; and hath not only purchased life and salvation to miserable sinners; but also by the power of his resurrection quickeneth the dead, that are dead in trespasses and in sin, and is found every way qualified to open, or unfold all the mysteries with the benefits of redemption.

Verse 6th. And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth,

Here we have a variety of objects to consider, 1st, The throne; 2dly, The four beasts and the elders; 3dly, The lamb that was slain, &c.

This throne is the same as is described in chap. iv. which the same apostle saw in his second vision;

on; his first was that of the seven golden candlesticks, which represented the seven churches of Asia, where we have a description given us of the throne, and of him that sat upon it, and of four and twenty elders sitting on their seats round about the throne, cloathed with white raiment, and having on their heads crowns of gold, &c. and of four beasts full of eyes before and behind, &c. And because herein lies the deepest mystery of the whole book of the Revelations, I shall therefore, before I proceed farther, endeavour according to my light, to shew what we are to understand by the throne, and by the four beasts, and the four and twenty elders, which are often times mentioned in this mysterious book: this is the principal thing we have to consider, in order to make plain; for to come to have this made intelligibly clear, would be to find a key proper by which all the other dark places of the book are opened; and may the Lord himself open my understanding, that I might know the scriptures, for without this, all my endeavours will be to no purpose, though I should be ever learning, I shall never be able to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Nevertheless where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, yea, truly there is liberty to come with boldness unto the throne of grace, and pray that our eyes be opened to see the wonders that are contained in God's law, and this we have to encourage us, that whatsoever we ask of him in prayer, believing, we shall receive.

Now,

Now, as I said, this throne is the same as is described in chap. iv. in which we find these words:

After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard, was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; and immediately I was in the spirit: and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne; and he that sat, was to look upon as a jasper, and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald: and round about the throne were four and twenty seats, and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold: and out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God: and before the throne there was a sea of glass, like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind: and the first beast was like a lion, and the second like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle: and the four beasts had each of them six wings about him, and they were full of eyes within; and they rest not day and night saying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come: and when these beasts gave glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who
liveth

liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

In saying something to the opening of this profound passage of scripture, two things are to be observed; first, The way and manner how this vision had been revealed, and how it ought to be understood: secondly, Whether the vision or any part thereof may be deemed a prophecy, relating to the future state of the church on earth.

In the first place, it is undeniable that all that is here spoken of, through the whole chapter, are emblematical representations of the heavenly glory, or something spoken of to express the thing signified, but not the things themselves, as they really are or ought to be understood, as may be seen by what is said of him that sat on the throne, who was to look upon as a jasper and a sardine stone; and the rainbow that was round about the throne, in sight was like unto an emerald. Here is a likeness of things, but not the things themselves as they ought to be understood, for he that sat on the throne is the Almighty God, that filleth heaven and earth: his absolute sovereignty is his throne, where he sits in glory, judging all things

things according to his word, by his infallible understanding and unerring wisdom rules and governs every event, in order to bring about his own holy end and purposes; the incomprehensible distinction of the three persons in the Godhead, is after a sort opened by the three precious stones, the jasper, the sardine, and the emerald, because the grace and beauty that these have in this lower region, doth most excel above all other things, especially seeing that here is representing of the virtue rather than of any form; the first aspect of the jasper stone, resembleth the person of the Father, for it is called the mother of pearl, there are so many kinds of it, and the honour of it is so ancient. Now what is it that can more fitly shadow out the Father, among all earthly things, as who is first in order of an eternity, always flourishing and shining in his own glory, and from whom the rest of the persons have their offspring without any beginning. The second aspect is of the sardine, by which the Son is represented; this is said to be red, as of a fleshy colour, and is a proper emblem of him that took flesh upon him for us, and was made man for us, now shining in his glory for his merit and amiableness. The third aspect is of the rainbow, that is, of the emerald, by which the Holy Ghost is noted out; this is he that compasseth the throne on all sides, as will surround the whole circuit of the divine Majesty with an unspeakable sweetness; and it is said, that the emerald doth shew forth so acceptable

ceptable sweet and shining liveliness, that the eyes of man cannot look upon any thing more willingly.

Now this vision was given to the apostle John by an extraordinary measure of the Spirit, for the benefit of the church in after ages; wherefore he says, and immediately I was in the spirit; it was by an immediate revelation he had a glorious manifestation of God's absolute sovereignty; a door was opened to him in heaven, (or in the glorious presence of God) beholding his glorious perfection; I believe it was through the channel of the word, shining through every part thereof, in such a manner, that he by the spirit of prophecy had a manifest discovery of the works of God, in things concerning the church, shaped out to his understanding, not in part only, but as it were in a perfect map, as appears by what is said to him in his first vision; where he is commanded to write the things which he had seen, and the things that are, and the things which shall be hereafter, chap. i. 19.

The next thing to be considered is, whether this vision, or any part thereof, may be deemed a prophecy referring to the future state of the church on earth; for this I hope no man will deny, but there are many prophetic passages of this book of Revelation, (as well as many of the Old Testament prophecies) that never to this day have had their full accomplishment: and although this vision, with respect to the manner
it

it was revealed, have had its full accomplishment in heaven, even in the days of the apostles; yet, touching the state of the church upon earth, it is clear that this vision (when it was first revealed) was prophetic, as appears by what is said to John in the voice that talked with him as with a trumpet, saying, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter; by which we are to understand, that the completion, or full accomplishment of this vision, as it is a prophecy of future events, concerning the state of the church on earth is not yet fulfilled, which we have of the bringing in of the body of the Jews, with the fulness of the Gentiles; that happy period, when all the prophecies in the Old and New Testaments, in respect to both the substantials and circumstantial of the same have their due accomplishment, and the kingdom of Christ upon earth appearing in its full majesty, and shining forth in its meridian brightness.

Thus much for the vision of the throne

Now, round about the throne, it is said, that there were four and twenty elders sitting on their seats, cloathed in white garments, and having on their heads crowns of gold.

I find the opinion of interpreters are various, concerning these four and twenty elders, &c. Some there are that do refer them to the twelve patriarchs or twelve apostles, and so many

many prophets; but here mention is made of a company that was to come, not such as are past, as has been observed in the beginning of the vision. Others do hold, that they are the whole assembly of the faithful worshippers; but in such a dark manner to me, I must confess, that amongst all their arguments I never could find one convincing evidence to justify the truth of their assertion. Nevertheless I do not say that these men wholly go astray from the scope of this vision; and therefore, in order to make every thing appear in its own native colour, it will be proper to observe the connection there is between the types and their antitypes.

The Holy Ghost, by the inspired apostle, alludes to that distribution of the holy functions, and the king's servitors, into four and twenty ranks, which was appointed by David, by the inspiration of God, *1 Chron. xxiv. &c.* for first of all, the high-priests were divided into four and twenty orders; in the same manner the chief Levites that ministered unto the priests, in the same chapter, verse 1, 31. so the holy missions, chap. xxv. and the porters, chap. xxvi. of those that ministered unto the king, there were four and twenty thousand in every one of their divisions, chap. xxvii. Seeing then the whole company of the children of Israel, whether we respect the tribe of Levi, or the rest of the people that was chosen, after a sort, unto the king's lot, whose business they dispatched, were distinguished into four and twenty orders.

These four and twenty elders, who stand in the room of the whole assembly of the faithful worshippers of God, under the gospel dispensation, worthily are reckoned into such orders, not so much with respect to their outward form of government, but with respect to the order of their behaviour, as they are found qualified in the sight of God; for first they are both priests and kings, as every one of the faithful in Christ have a just title to, see chap. i. Now we find there was no such orders used under the law, until king David's time who appointed it, he being an eminent type of Christ, and of whose lineage Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.

Now, upon consideration, it might be thought that when Christ came to set up his kingdom in the world, he would establish either the like order, or something that was better in place of it; thus our Lord Jesus Christ did; for, when he laid the foundation of his church, first of all he chose twelve apostles, and furnished them with extraordinary gifts to fit them for their office; answerable to their type the twelve patriarchs, who were the sons of Jacob, he who was also called Israel. Now the offspring of the twelve patriarchs were the twelve tribes of Israel; but the offspring of the twelve apostles of Christ were Christian believers, of whom there were chosen a company of faithful witnesses, chosen of God in Christ, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, declaring that the fulfilment of the types under the law are verified, brought to light,

light, and advanced in place with honour and glory, in the bringing in of the antitypes under the gospel dispensation; the connection there is between the types and their antitypes declare them four and twenty in number, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles; the believing Gentiles as the representatives of the Gentile church, peculiar to the doctrine of the twelve apostles, declaring the whole law is fulfilled in Christ; the believing Jews, as the representatives of the Jewish church, peculiar to the twelve tribes, declaring the truth of their predictions, as it is fulfilled in the types under the law; and all agreeing, that the shadows in the evening of the law, have vanished away, by the appearance of the substance in the morning of the gospel.

The believing Jews, and the believing Gentiles formed for the evening of the law, and for the morning of the gospel, making one whole natural day, containing four and twenty hours, for the number of the elders, to shew, that the fulness of time was come; thus the evening and the morning are so joined by Moses, in his description of the creation, to the making of the complete day, *Gen. i.* The truth of this allegorical speech is confirmed by our Saviour himself, in his answer to his disciples, who was for dissuading him from following his course in the work of the day, namely, that he should not return to Judea for fear of the Jews ther, said, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again? but Jesus answered them,

them, saying, are there not twelve hours in the day? if any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world; but, if he walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him, *John xi. 9, 10.* Now, it must be allowed, that our Saviour here hath spoken parabolically, and that his meaning was, that there was no fear of stumbling if they would obey his orders, and follow his directions, since the day spring from on high happily hath visited them, while he himself, the light of the world, was present with them; but he that walketh in the night, that is, he that will prefer the shadows in the law to the substance in the gospel, (as these unbelieving Jews do) or, in other words, he that walketh according to the imagination of his own heart stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

What follows next is the four and twenty seats or thrones, on which the elders did sit: this hath perplexed many, I may say, every one that ever I heard discourse on the subject, to find out how it is, that there should be a seat or a throne for every one of the elders; but if we consider the scope of this vision, we shall find every part of it are like so many direct lines that are parallel to each other, all running one way; for if the whole assembly of the faithful be the thing signified by the four and twenty elders (as has been already cleared), then the four and twenty seats on which the elders sat, must be the accomplishment of the promises, and of the prophecies,

as

as they are fulfilled in Christ to every one of his faithful servants. Now the promises and prophecies found written in the holy scriptures, in which they all have a share of the benefit, and being all so very antient, and the full measure of the same in the accomplishment declare their fulness of stature and advanced years, gives them a just title of eldership, and therefore they are called elders, agreeable to what is said by the prophet, *Daniel* vii. 9. I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the ancient of days did sit; which is a prophecy of Christ's kingdom, in opposition to the powers of darkness.

Secondly, The righteousness of the cause they maintain, and the spotless purity of the doctrine they profess; but more especially the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed unto them is noted out, by their being cloathed with white raiment, for to be cloathed with fine linen, white and clean, is the righteousness of saints, *Rev.* iii. 4. and xix. 8.

Thirdly, The victory they obtain through Christ over the powers of darkness, their growth in grace, and perseverance in well doing, makes them as kings sitting on thrones, judging the world, according to these words of Christ, *Matt.* xix. 28. And Jesus said unto them, verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Fourthly, That glory and honour conferred upon them by the victory they obtain through the grace of God in Christ over the three grand enemies of man's salvation, to wit, the world, the flesh, and the devil, are the crowns of gold they had upon their heads.—For crowns of gold not only are in signs of victory, but also of prosperity, good success, truth and faithfulness, chap. vi. 2.

Now the four and twenty elders had their seats round about the throne of God, to shew, that they have authority from God himself to execute judgment according to the ecclesiastic and civil laws. The lightening, the thunder, and the voices that proceeded from the throne, alludes to that dreadful alarm in giving of the law on mount Sinai, whereby the Israelites were cited unto the tribunal and judgment of God, the sound whereof went on and grew on greatly, in so much that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake, *Exod. xix. 19. Heb. xii. 21.* But the words here do signify, the fearful threatenings and denunciation of God's anger in the punishment of the wicked, particularly the enemies of the church; when the Lord at any time did visit his people in his loving kindness and tender mercy, he always at the same time have given visible proofs of his hatred of sin, by punishing of the enemies of his church and people, for without holiness no man shall (in mercy) see the Lord, *Heb. xii. 14, 25—28.*

The next part of the vision which follow that of the four and twenty elders sitting on their seats,

feats, &c. is the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne; and these seven lamps of fire burning, represents the whole scripture prophecies, fulfilling under the gospel dispensation; and in order to make this appear authentic, it is necessary first to observe that as the number twenty four holds out eminency, so the number seven always in this book doth signify perfection, or something that be whole or complete; now the seven lamps of fire are said to be the seven spirits of God, and this, because they are the gifts of the Spirit of God, for the prophecy came not in old times by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, *2 Pet. i. 21*. They are said to be seven fold, because the prophecies, with respect to the canonical parts, were completed at the time when John wrote the last in the book of the Revelation, which afterwards there was no room left for adding or diminishing, as we read in chap. xxii. 18, 19. By the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, we are to understand, that the whole scripture prophecy are always fulfilling in the preaching of the word, &c. therefore says the psalmist David, that the word of God is a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path, *Psal. cxix. 105*.

After the gift of prophecy, the gift of preaching is declared, as is emblematically represented in the vision; and this gift of preaching and expounding the word under the gospel dispensation, I take to be the thing signified by the sea of
C 4 glass

glass which was before the throne: now in as much as the gospel is an ocean of eternal truths, and a great mystery, as we may see by comparing these scriptures together, 1 *Cor.* ii. 8, with 1 *Tim.* iii. 16, and therefore may be likened to a deep sea, and a sea of glass, for says the apostle, we behold with open face as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 *Cor.* iii. 18. The amazing length, breadth, height and depth of the love of Christ in the gospel, which is said to surpass all knowledge, declares it to be without measure, as the waters of the sea; and therefore the unsearchable riches of Christ, which is freely offered to all under the gospel, were by the prophet *Isaiah* described under the similitude of water, wine, and milk, that are to be purchased without money and without price. Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye unto the waters, &c. *Isaiah* lv. 1. Of this water (the word preached with the gifts and graces of the Spirit) there is a river, whose streams make glad the city of our God, *Psal.* xlii. Again, the gifts and graces of the Spirit given of Christ in the gospel, is called a fountain of living water, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall be in him: a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, *John* iv. 14. This gift of preaching and expounding the word in the gospel, is here called a sea of glass, clear as crystal, to let us see the difference of this and that legal sea under the law,

which was made of brass, *1 Kings* vii. 23. The face of God did shine unto his people, but somewhat obscurely, in the reading and expounding the law under that dispensation, which things Moses declared by putting a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look unto the end of that which is abolished; but by the gift of preaching and expounding the word of God, the gospel is declared to be a sea of glass before the throne like unto (or clear as) crystal.

Now the gifts and graces of the sanctifying Spirit is represented in the vision under the similitude of four beasts, full of eyes before and behind, which I think is spoken in reference to the order which Christ set in his church, according to that saying of the apostle, *1 Cor.* xii. 28. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly, prophets, thirdly, teachers, after that miracles, &c. these are the beasts full of eyes before and behind; a figurative representation of the gifts and graces of the sanctifying Spirit peculiar to apostles, prophets, teachers, and saints; for the first beast was like unto a lyon, to shew strength, awfulness, and boldness; the second beast was like a calf, and this is to shew meekness, patience, &c. the third beast had his face as a man, to denote prudence, temperance, and piety; the fourth beast was like a flying eagle, and this to shew forth a gift more excellent to the renewing of strength.

These

These distinguishing characters which are proper to the four beasts, are also peculiarly applicable to apostles, prophets, teachers, and saints. Now the first character which is proper to the first beast is the lion-like strength and boldness of the inspired apostles, who was placed as the first in order in the church, and who was furnished with extraordinary gifts in order to fit them for their office. *Acts* iv. 13. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

The second character is the long suffering patience of God's servants, the prophets, in regard to the great opposition they have generally met with in delivering their message from the court of heaven, and for holding a testimony to the truth of their predictions, in the midst of an unbelieving and gainsaying people, *Acts* vii. 52.

Now as a calf is not advanced to its full growth until it is arrived to its full stature, so the prophecies foretold by the prophets are not made perfect until all be fulfilled. Thus the Apostle Paul declared in his discourse of the list of the worthies that lived under the dispensation of the law, who all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth; these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promises,

mises. God having provided some better thing for us, says the apostle, that they without us should not be made perfect, *Heb. xi. 39, 40.*

The third character, which is proper to the third beast that resembled the face of a man, is, the prudence, temperance, and piety of the faithful teachers or pastors of the flock of Christ; who, by wisdom rightly dividing the word of truth, for men's edification and consolation, and as far as they are lovers of hospitality, lovers of good men, sober, just, and temperate, holding fast the faithful word, that they may be able both to exhort and convince the gainsayers, *Tit. i. 8, 9.* As there is nothing more can distinguish the difference between the face of a man and that of a beast, than this, that one should be possessed of this character, so nothing could make the face of a minister of the gospel shine more bright than to be possessed of the gifts and graces of the sanctifying spirit peculiarly applicable to the third beast, here-mentioned, who had a face resembling that of a man.

The fourth character, peculiarly proper to the fourth beast that was like unto a flying eagle, is, that excellent gift of charity which is the bond of perfectness, and is put in the room of miracles, &c. to the renewing of strength to the faint and weary, and those that be heavy laden. Now this gift is proper only to saints, for charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish

nish away; for we know in part, and we prophecy in part, says the apostle, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away, *1 Cor. xiii. 8—10.*

These distinguishing characters, as they are peculiarly proper to apostles, prophets, teachers, and saints, are called four beasts, because they, in some sort, resemble these creatures; for here the apostles had the fortitude and boldness of a lion; the prophets had the patience of a calf; the faithful teacher of Christ hath the prudence and knowledge of a man; and the saint, by having communion with his God, mount up high as with wings, and has his strength renewed him as an eagle. The number of these beasts are four, to shew Christ's fulness, for as the number seven hold out perfection, so the number four always in this book hold some certain fulness; now the church is called his fulness, *Eph. i. 22, 23.* These four beasts had each of them six wings about them, and they were full of eyes within; and they rest not day or night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. Here it is said, that they were full of eyes within, plainly signifying that they were full of the light of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, by which they praise the Almighty God, saying, holy, holy, &c. Again, the four beasts are called by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. i. 5. four living creatures; plainly signifying that they are the gifts and graces of the Spirit of life from God; and the

the four beasts or living creatures are not only mentioned by that prophet, when speaking of his extraordinary vision given by the Spirit of God, but the apostle John tells us further, that the four beasts were the interpreters of these remarkable discoveries that took place at the opening of the four first seals; and the prophet Isaiah in discoursing of these seraphims, as he calls them, chap. vi. shew them to be appointed as the effectual means of conversion, and the same which qualified himself not only for his office as a prophet, but also to live as a saint. When the Lord in mercy visits a poor sinner, whether in the ordinary or extraordinary way, it is always for the most part, as it were, by three steps, 1st. God gives him a manifest discovery of his glory, which surprizes the convicted sinner, and makes him admire the wisdom, the righteousness, and the holiness of God in the glass of the word; as it was with the prophet, when God, after this manner, manifested himself to him, when he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, and his train filled the temple, chap. vi. 1. 2dly, God gives him a sight of his own vileness, even of the corruption of his nature, and of the evil nature of sin, and the fatal consequence of living in a course of sin, as it was with the prophet, verse 5. Then said I, Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. 3dly, God applies a proper medicine, a balm for healing the disease,

disease, even that remedy provided by God himself, by which his iniquity is taken away, and his sin purged, as it was also with the prophet, verses 6, 7. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

Here we may observe, that the prophet was not only illuminated with the spirit of prophecy through which he was enabled to foretel of things fuller concerning the glory of the Messiah's kingdom, but his heart also was sanctified with the Holy Ghost as with fire, as is represented by the seraphims, having a live coal in his hand which he had taken with the tongs from the altar; and, it is certain that this vision of the prophet which he saw that same year when King Uzziah died, was concerning the glory of the Messiah's kingdom, where he saw the Lord Jesus, as king and head of his church, sitting on his throne, high, and lifted up, and his train filled the temple; above it stood the seraphims, each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly; all to shew the different ways and various methods which these extraordinary and ordinary church officers have taken in declaring the will of God for our salvation, and of their connection one with another, according to the words of the prophet, verse 3. and one cried unto another, and said,

said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory: by which it plainly doth appear, that the four beasts, or living creatures, are representations of the gifts and graces of the sanctifying spirit, peculiar to apostles, prophets, teachers and saints.

Thus far I have endeavoured to open the meaning of the words written in the fourth chapter, which is a plain discovery of the vision of the throne, and of the four beasts, and the four and twenty elders. I come now to that, where it is said, that in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth unto all the earth, *Rev. v. 6.*

In saying something to the opening of this critical part of scripture; first, it will be necessary here again to remark, that as the number four signify some certain fulness, so the number seven always in this book do hold out perfection. This I have already observed, by what is said of the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, chap. iv. 5. and of the four beasts, verse 8.

Now, in the midst of the throne there stood a Lamb as it had been slain, &c. which is our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world, who was bruised for our iniquities; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, contrived by the council of the
Jews;

Jews; for although his innocency was declared by Pontius Pilate, the governor, who said over and over again, that he found no fault in him at all, yet, nevertheless, he delivered him up to be crucified as a lamb without blemish, *Acts* iv. 27, 28. for of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

But it is also said, that this Lamb of God, stood in the midst of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, intimating to us, that by the gifts and graces of the Spirit, we come to know by experience Christ's fulness, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, is, in the midst of the assembly of the faithful; for, if but two or three be gathered together in his name, there he will be in the midst of them. And it is by observing all he commanded them to do, he hath promised to be with them to the end of the world.

This fulness that is in Christ is emblematically shaped out to us in the word under various forms, through different types and figures; because in a state of imperfection, we cannot know but in part, and therefore the wisdom of God found it necessary that we should look through different figures, as through a glass. Before we come perfect in the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Christ, it is said, that the church

church is Christ's fulness, which is also his mystical body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, *Eph.* i. 23. Again, it is said, that in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, *Col.* ii. 9. because he received the spirit without measure to fit him for all his mediatory offices, that he might be a perfect Saviour, to answer for all the types and figures under the law, and in opposition to all the shadows there imposed, until the time of the reformation under the gospel; and this fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Christ bodily, is here mystically set forth by the lamb having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth, which signify the all-perfect gifts and graces of the holy Spirit, otherwise briefly summed up in the characters proper to the four beasts, or living creatures, peculiar to apostles, prophets, teachers, and saints. Here we find, that the horns and the eyes of the lamb that was slain, and the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, chap. iv. and the seven spirits of God signifying much the same thing, and this to teach us to compare spiritual things with spiritual, in order to know the mind of the Spirit, in the language of the scriptures; for, it is plain that the horns of the lamb, here signify Christ's kingly power, by which he executes the office of king and head of his church; and, by seven horns, we understand absolute sovereignty, or, that his kingdom rules over all; wherefore it is said, that he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King
D of

of kings, and Lord of lords, chap. xix. 16. the seven eyes of the lamb also signify Christ's prophetic office. Christ is the great prophet of his people, he not only foretold many things which we know has come to pass, but it was through the inspiration of his Spirit, that all the holy prophets, since the world began, have foretold of things to come concerning the majesty and glory of his spiritual kingdom. This is he of whom Moses spake, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as has spoken, have likewise foretold of these days, *Acts* iii. 21—24. And, seeing that the seven spirits of God, which is the same, even the seven eyes of the lamb, are said to be sent forth into all the earth, intimateth that Christ has a kingdom in the earth, and although his kingdom is not (at this time) of the world, yet the time is coming when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of Christ, and should from henceforth reign for ever and ever, and therefore he is able and just, even to cause unsanctified persons at all times, and in every place, to become instruments of providence, for bringing about his own holy end and purpose, for the accomplishment of his promises to the church, as is further amplified

amplified by the voices of the seven angels, with seven trumpets, chap. viii.

Verses 7, 8. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

This book of prophecy containing the glory of the Messiah's kingdom, which was closed up and sealed, particularly at the death of Christ, as it were quite hid in the highest secrecy of God's counsel, which the Lamb have taken in order to unfold it, in the bringing to light all the mysteries thereof. And this our Lord Jesus Christ did, when he entered into his glory, after he obtained a compleat victory over sin and the grave by the power of his resurrection from the dead, for then all power was given him in heaven and on earth, and when he ascended upon high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. This is a prophecy in the book of Psalms, concerning Christ and the glory of his kingdom, which was most eminently fulfilled in the primitive state of the Christian church, manifested forth by the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, &c. which was also foretold by the prophet *Joel*, chap. ii. 28, 29. where we see the mystery of the four beasts and the four and twenty elders plainly discovered; where we read

of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost given to the Christian church, as it is said, they fell down before the Lamb, that is, they worshipped him as the true God, to whom all worship and adoration doth belong, now sitting on his Father's throne, for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, &c. *John v. 22, 23.*

Now in the doing of this homage to the Lamb, with the profoundest reverence, it is said, that every one of them had harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints, which in plain words is the gifts and graces of the sanctifying Spirit communicated to the Christian church; for the harps represent all praises and thanksgivings, effected by the four beasts, or living creatures; the golden vials full of odours are the effectual prayers of the faithful, or as the apostle himself say, golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

Verse 9. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou hast been slain, and has redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

The subject matter of this song is, in ascribing praise to the Lamb, in that he was worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, because he was slain, and so redeemed them by his precious blood. This is the ground of their praises and

and of their thanksgivings, that the Lamb of God voluntarily should lay down his life for his sheep that he might take it again. A new song is a matter of joy for valuable benefits newly received or obtained; likewise this song is the subject matter of gladness, for every member of Christ's mystical body flowing from a grateful sense of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge: their received gifts and graces, for his sake, through his merit and mediation, is a key for opening the gates of wisdom; and as a spring to their devotion that afford them matter for praises to him, who hath, after this manner, loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

But to make this appear more clear, it is necessary that the extent of John's vision should be considered, because it is said, chap. iv. 1. that the manifestation thereof had respect (namely the throne) to the times after it was seen, though the vision itself seemed to him as already accomplished in heaven; yet, by what is said afterwards concerning the same throne, and of the same vision, it is plain, that the whole is spoken in reference to the glory of Christ's kingdom, which was to be manifested, by degrees, from the resurrection of Christ until the finishing of the mystery of God, for which cause, the whole body of the Christian church, from the resurrection of Christ, until the restoration of the Jews, when the vail shall be taken off their

heart, in the finishing of the mystery, is represented by the four beasts and four and twenty elders; and as the four beasts and the four and twenty elders are always spoken of, as if they were united in the same cause, in giving glory to God through a Redeemer, by which we come to understand the nature of that union between Christ and believers; the communion of saints, make up one holy catholic or universal church, that are redeemed by Christ's blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Verse 10. And hast made us unto our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth,

As the words already spoken and explained, breathes out the language of the holy catholic or universal church dispersed in every nation, united and gathered together under one head, one Lord, one faith, one baptism; so every member of that body is made kings and priests unto God: first, they are made kings, in as much as they are made sons of God, born heirs to an inheritance, yea, joint heirs with Christ; they are enabled to judge themselves to the subduing their inordinate affections, according to the rule of the written word; for he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man, 1 Cor. ii. 15, 16. And they are made priests unto God, by the daily offering up the sacrifices of praises and thanksgivings to God for Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of eternal glory; as also they are priests, in as much as they mortify

tify the deeds of the old man, with its affections and lusts.

Secondly, They are made kings and priests unto God by virtue of the promises, which hold out, that in all their sufferings and hard trials in bearing a testimony to the truth as it is in Christ, they are made more than conquerors through him that hath loved them, *Rom. viii. 37.* And that after the first resurrection, they that have part in the same shall be made priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years, *Rev. xx. 6.* To this purpose, it is added in course, and we shall reign on the earth, that is, we the church on earth shall reign in triumph, when the time comes that the saints shall possess the kingdom, *Dan. vii. 22.* and this at the times and the seasons when God will restore the kingdom again to Israel, when Christ's dominion shall extend from sea to sea, even unto all the ends of the earth, according to the words of the prophet; and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him, ver. 27.

Verses 11, 12. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them were ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud

voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Here we find the angels of God in heaven, joining with the church on earth, in ascribing all praises, honour, and glory to Christ; the angels of God in heaven, and all the saints upon earth, are included in that number, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; which signify an exceeding great number, which is otherwise expressed by a great multitude which no man could number, chap. vii. 9, 10. compared with *Daniel* vii. 10. the whole having a special reference to the glory of the Messiah's kingdom on earth, which we are commanded to pray for, according to the third petition of the Lord's prayer, which is, Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And as the angels of God are said to be all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, *Heb.* i. 14. therefore angels here are to be understood either literally, or in plain words, the angels of God in heaven sent forth to minister unto the saints, or metaphorically, that is ministers of state, or eminent instruments of providence, whereby men are invested with authority in the kingdom of our Lord, according to the word of the Lord by the prophet *Daniel*, chap. vii. 13, 14. I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought

brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Verses 13, 14. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen: and the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Here the whole creation which groaned and travailed in pain from the beginning, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body, *Rom. viii. 22.* is now praising and blessing him that sitteth upon the throne, in that he hath magnified his great name through the whole earth, in making all things new according to his faithful word, which shall be manifested in restoring all things for the new creation formed by the essential word, which was made flesh, shall appear complete, as it were in perfect beauty; and this, when the whole body of the Jews which are dispersed shall be gathered together, with the fulness of the Gentiles, and be united as one flock under one shepherd. As we have many a promise given us, both in the Old and New Testaments,

Testaments, of a new heaven and a new earth, wherein truth, righteousness, and peace are for ever to dwell; as is said, when we all with one heart and with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, sincerely, truly, and constantly love one the other, and abounding in all the fruits of the Spirit; then the four beasts, who are men endued with extraordinary and ordinary measures of the gifts and graces of the sanctifying Spirit shall excite and stir up every creature living in this new earth, in praising God, saying, Amen, or, so let it be. And the four and twenty elders, (the whole body of the church) namely the body of the Jews, with the fulness of the Gentiles united in the same cause, falling down in worshipping of God who liveth for ever and ever.

THE

T H E
FIRST SEAL OPENED.

REVELATION, Chap. vi. 1, 2.

AND I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come, and see. And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.

There are two things remarkable in the opening of the seals, that requires to be considered; first, the principal agent, he that opened the seals; and the interpreter, he that discovered the scene. The principal agent was the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world; for although he was once dead, yet now he is alive, and behold, he liveth for ever; for, it was by the power of his resurrection he opened this seal; and it is by the power of his resurrection he raiseth his members that are dead in trespasses and in sin, unto newness of life; and it is by the power of his resurrection he will raise the dead out of their graves to judgment at the last day.

Now,

Now, as to the event that was brought forth by the opening of the first seal, we are directed to observe a noise, (as it were thunder) and we find that thunder is spoken of in scripture, as the voice of the Lord Jesus, as it is written in the book of *Psalms xxxix.* 3, 4. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, the God of glory thundereth, the voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. Therefore the noise that was heard like thunder, is the voice of the Lord Jesus, uttered by his cloud of witnesses, his sent ambassadors, in publishing abroad and declaring that their Lord was risen from the dead, whereby remission of sins, particularly to the Jews, was preached upon their repentance, according to these words, repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, *Acts iii.* 19. Which times of refreshing relates to that remarkable out-pouring of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, &c. after Christ's resurrection and ascension; at which extraordinary event, Christ's spiritual kingdom came with power. Here it might be said, that the glory of God thundered, &c.

Secondly, This noise like thunder, denotes some awful threatening to light upon unbelievers, proclaimed by ministers of the gospel; as it is said, he that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned, *Mark xvi.* 16.

Again, he that discovered the scene, is one of the four beasts; accordingly, when the Lamb opened

Chap. vi. THE FIRST SEAL OPENED. 49

opened one of the seals, John adds, one of the four beasts said, Come, and see; it was the first beast that resembled the lion, that gave this alarm; for the strength, boldness, and courage of the lion do represent the extraordinary gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, given primarily to the apostles, particularly when they were first inspired in the day of pentecost, *Acts* ii. This is one of the four beasts, which said, Come, and see; that is, come and see the work of the Lord Jesus, the wonderful works of God; come and see the stone which was rejected by the builders, the same made chief stone of the corner; come and see poor, despised, unlearned, and ignorant fishermen, and such-like mean men, that never were trained up in schools of good learning, nor taught any other language but only that of their own country, the native tongue of the Galileans; now they in an instant are enabled both to speak and understand the languages of every country of all nations under heaven, to the great consternation of multitudes of people out of all nations that came to Jerusalem, for every man heard them speak in his own language the wonderful works of God.—Now, the white horse signify the event brought forth in the opening of the seal, and is to be understood in the bright displays of divine truths, the accomplishments of the promises held out in the everlasting covenant, and afterwards, most eminently displayed in preaching the word, by which glad tidings of peace and reconciliation was brought from
2
heaven

50 THE SECOND SEAL OPENED. Chap. vi.

heaven to miserable sinners, of which, that fair colour white was a proper emblem.

The bow and the crown which was given him that sat on the white horse, by which he went forth conquering and to conquer, is both an evident token of Christ's victory over sin and the grave, and the great success of the gospel after his resurrection and ascension; hence it is said when he ascended upon high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men, *Eph. iv. 8.*

The Second Seal opened.

Verses 3, 4. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come, and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword.

The event that came to pass at the opening of the second seal, is quite of a different nature than that of the former.—For the first seal brought forth the white horse, with his rider, which betoken peace on earth, and good will to men: but we see at the opening of the second seal we have the red horse, with his rider; a scene of a bloody colour, and of a destroying nature, which was to take peace from the earth; and that they should kill one another with a great slaughter.

Now,

Chap. vi. THE SECOND SEAL OPENED. 51

Now, what was this but the fulfillment of former predictions, as was represented in the explanation of the noise that was like thunder, which denote dreadful judgments upon despisers or rejectors of the gospel; and therefore a great sword is prepared in the hand of him that sat on the red horse, which signify much war and blood shed; according to our Saviour's predictions, concerning the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, effected by the powers of the Romans; the dreadful judgment and lamentable calamities of these times, when the Jews were dispossessed of their stated privilege, we have an authentic account in Josephus's history, a very judicious Jewish writer.

But the second beast, that resembled the calf, leads me to consider this as having a reference to the present circumstance of the Christian church, when the second seal was opened; and therefore the second beast says, Come, and see; that is, come and behold the present situation of the Christian church; a spiritual war occasioned by false apostles, deceitful workers, as they are called ministers of unrighteousness, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for satan himself is transformed into an angel of light; therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works, 2 Cor. xi. 13—15. For by this time antichrist began to trouble the church, striving to have the pre-

eminence over Christ and his holy apostles, where there was a departing from the simplicity of the gospel, by which spiritual pride, ambition and vain glory were like to bear the sway, a departing from wholesome doctrine that teacheth and disposes men to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation: the epistles of Paul the apostle directed to Timothy, and the epistle of Jude, was written (occasionally) to put a stop to these growing disorders and divisions among Christians, even in these earliest sun shining days, as appears by the scope of words contained in those epistles, as they were particularly intended to point out the deceitful works of darkness; as the same apostle says in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, that the mystery of iniquity were already working, which was to be revealed in its time; this, together with that desperate obstinacy of unbelieving Jews, and the cruel usage of heathen Rome, the church was surrounded with enemies on all sides, both within and without.—It was an extraordinary trial, and required an extraordinary measure of the gifts and graces of the sanctifying Spirit to withstand the difficulty in proportion; and therefore the long suffering patience of God's faithful servants the prophets, in waiting for the manifestation of their visions, which is the character proper to the second beast, that resembled the calf, was both necessary and suitable, and to be had in high esteem in the Christian

Chap. vi. THE THIRD SEAL OPENED. 53

Christian church, especially at such a time of trial.

The Third Seal opened.

Verſes 5, 6. And when he had opened the third ſeal, I heard the third beaſt ſay, Come, and ſee. And I beheld, and lo, a black horſe; and he that ſat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the miſt of the four beaſts ſay, A meaſure of wheat for a penny, and three meaſures of barley for a penny; and ſee thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

The gradual diſplays of Divine Providence, in regard to the events brought forth at the opening of the two former ſeals, when compared with this, ſeems ſtill to be accompanied with additional hardships, for new ſtraits and difficulties are daily growing: for the black horſe ſignify a ſad diſpenſation, and the pair of balances in the hand of the rider denote a ſcarcity. As to the nature of theſe hard diſpenſations, and thoſe that are particularly concerned in them, the third beaſt that had his face as a man, will diſcover the myſtery.

I have already ſaid, that the pair of balances in the hand of him that ſat on the black horſe do ſignify a ſcarcity; for famine, in ſcripture, when taken both in a literal and figurative ſenſe, is ſpoken of by giving bread by weight; the firſt is in *Lev. xxvi. 26*. And when I have broken the ſtaff of your bread, ten women ſhall bake your bread in one oven, and they ſhall deliver you

E

your

your bread again by weight; and ye shall eat and not be satisfied. Now the voice that came from the midst of the four beasts, which say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, &c. intimates, that this scarcity is not literally to be understood, but is an allegory relating to the affairs of the church under persecution; to this purpose we find it expressed in *Amos* viii. 11. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord. Now, this is that scarcity which here is principally meant, a scarcity of faithful pastors, a scarcity of sound doctrine, for the black horse hold out the mournful situation of the church under the tyrannical proceedings of the Romans in their severities, bonds, and imprisonments. Nevertheless Christ here goes forth conquering, and to conquer, for the voice of the third beast that had his appearance as a man, promises an additional supply of the gifts and graces of the sanctified spirit, according to the measure and nature of that trial; these figurative expressions doth hold out, it is a truth worthy of our acknowledgement, that the end for which Christ opened the seal was in order to qualify the church, which he has bought with his own blood, and that, answerable to the gifts and graces of the sanctifying spirit, which is the glory of Christ's kingdom; and not merely by punishing the wicked, in a way of justice on the opposers of the gospel, according to the

Chap. vi. THE THIRD SEAL OPENED. 55

the mistaken notions of some who apply the various judgments represented in the opening of the seals, to the gradual decay and final destruction of heathen Rome, although that is included in the opening of the seals; yet the chief end for opening of the seven seals is, first, to manifest forth Christ's fulness to qualify the church; for, it is evident, that the glory of the Redeemer's kingdom is made manifest, by degrees, in the opening of the seals, and therefore these hard trials, represented by the red, the black, and the pale horse, brought forth in the opening of the second, the third, and the fourth seals, chiefly is ordained of God for the exercise of grace; and therefore this new trial, under the third seal, was both necessary and seasonable, especially since the additional supply of the gifts and graces of the sanctifying spirit, was ready to be distributed according to the character proper to the the third beast, answerable to the prudence, temperance, and piety of Christ's faithful pastors: a precious gift, a great blessing, and highly valuable at such a time of trial.

As to the voice which was heard in the midst of the four beasts, which say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine, must be understood according to the nature of that, from whence the voice proceeded, which, as is said, came from the midst of the four beasts, which voice can mean nothing less than the voice of the work of sanctification carried on

56 THE THIRD SEAL OPENED. Chap. vi.

by degrees, through the furnace of affliction. I heard (says John) a voice in the midst of the four beasts, say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine; which in general holds forth, that the necessities of life were scarce so, at such a time of trial, when faithful pastors are debarred from preaching of the word, (the gospel) which is the common-wealth of the true Israelites of God, is very rare. Sound faith, and wholesome doctrine, generally are but little regarded. As to the oil and the wine, which was not to be hurt or diminished, may be taken both in a literal and in a spiritual sense; first, literally, it signifies the superfluities of earthly enjoyments, by which the men of the world gratify their sensual appetite, which the great and rich men have no lack, notwithstanding the scarcity which often happen to the poor, or lower rank of people. But when these things are spiritually to be understood, touching great Christians, those that are rich in grace, their oil and wine cannot be hurt, which is the fruit of the spirit, viz. love, joy, peace, long suffering, faith, &c. For, says the apostle, the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost, *Rom. xiv. 17.* These could neither be hurt nor diminished by outward trouble, but rather increased; for when the disciples of Christ were very sorry at hearing that their blessed Lord was to depart from them, he said, Peace I leave with you,
my

Ch.vi. THE FOURTH SEAL OPENED. 57

my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let it be afraid, *John* xiv. 27. For as oil and wine cheer the heart of man, and make his face to shine, *Psal.* civ. 15. much more doth the comforts of the Holy Ghost, with the answer of a good conscience, through the merits of Christ, bring peace, joy, and comfort to a weary soul, even in the midst of the greatest straits and difficulties.

The Fourth Seal opened.

Verses 7, 8. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come, and see. And I looked, and behold, a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was death, and hell followed with him: and power was given unto them, over the fourth part of the earth to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Here the fourth beast, that resembled the flying eagle, with his offering grace in renewing of strength, calls on men, and gently invites every true believer, like a still small voice, saying, Come, and see the event brought forth at the opening of this seal; for it is a scene, more dreadful than any of the former discoveries; for now the suffering state of the Christian church under the seals, is arrived to its utmost severity, and to its highest degree of cruelty, effected by base and

58 THE FOURTH SEAL OPENED. Ch. vi.

unreasonable men: for the pale horse signifies the killing of the saints, even the faithful witnesses of Jesus! who suffer martyrdom for the testimony which they held; the greatest of all that has been transacted under the heathen emperors, is here represented, by what is said of death and hell, that followed with the pale horse, and therefore the renewing strength of the fourth beast, that was like the flying eagle, was absolutely necessary, to support the faithful from sinking under the heavy load of tribulation and terrible calamity, which is here in a figure represented. It is said, that power was given unto them, over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with hunger, sword, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

These words, when taken literally, means war, famine, and pestilence: but as the whole of what is here spoken relate to the terrible afflicting circumstances of the Christian church, we are therefore called to understand, that the fourth part of the earth is the Christians, which, upon supposition, is reckoned the fourth part of the Roman empire, and is here in a manner stated as the earth, or the world; for when Cæsar Augustus made a decree, that all the world should be taxed, *Luke ii.* it means, so far as the empire of Rome extended, so that the fourth part of the earth here is the Christian world, or such as professed the faith of Jesus, or the Christian religion, that was under subjection to the civil laws and government of Rome, when this fourth seal was

Ch.vi. THE FOURTH SEAL OPENED. 59

was opened; or, whether the Christians made up just a fourth part or not, it is a matter of indifference as to the subject in hand, only we are to observe John's usual method, in several passages of this book of the Revelations, in his stating parts of things, as the third part of the sun, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars, &c. chap. viii. 8—12. And thus to teach us that God is always carrying on his work by degrees, until the consummation of all things, and that in a state of imperfection we cannot know but in part, but when that which is perfect is come, (in a state of glory) then that which is in part shall be done away, 1 Cor. xiii. 10. As to what is said that power was given unto them, namely, death and hell, which followed with the pale horse, over the fourth part of the earth, namely, The Christians to kill with sword and with hunger, and with death; and what can this death and hell be? Certainly, without any dispute, the Holy Ghost by this signify the powers of darkness, with its hellish invention, contriving how to root out and destroy the Christian church, which always was an eye sore to them, as they are called by Christ himself, the gates of hell, that should not totally prevail against his church. To kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, signify the hard dispensations in these times, at the opening of the second, the third, and fourth seals, that more and more increased, as is represented by the red, the black, and the pale horses, as is already demonstrated.

60 THE FOURTH SEAL OPENED. Ch.vi.

Now we have the words with the meaning, power was given to these agents of the devil, (or the gates of hell) to kill and destroy the faithful witnesses of Jesus; power was given unto them (says John) over the fourth part of the earth, to kill, &c. and with the beasts of the earth; this last word doth clear up all that hath been said, for, by the beasts of the earth we are to understand, men of beastly disposition, base, carnal, unreasonable, earthly, sensual, devilish, as was the apostle's lot, who, as he says, after the manner of men fought with beasts at Ephesus, *1 Cor.* xv. 32.

It is amazing to see how the Lord our God so perpetually, in the course of his Providence, puts his own people to grief, in suffering their implacable enemies to triumph over them, yea, many a time when they expected a favourable hearing of their prayers to deliver them out of their distresses, they have, at the same time, sunk deeper into the mire, that is, more and more into crosses, and world's losses; as if God, by this hard way of dealing, seemed to disown or disapprove of both their children-like disposition, and their sincere endeavours to please him; as it is oftentimes seen that the vilest men are exalted, when good Christians are abased, yea, cast out as vagabonds, and hated even among their own Christian brethren, and for nothing but because of the image of Christ that shine in them, which the generality of men, even of Christian professors, have a natural aversion to, because it is not of this world,

Ch. vi. THE FOURTH SEAL OPENED. 61

world, therefore the world hates it, and cannot abide with it no more than darkness can dwell with light; and although persecution in this our day generally are cried down, yet the enmity in the heart, which is opposite to the image of Christ, is now as powerful as ever; yea, never more powerful, nor more like to bear the sway, than when divisions and animosities among Christian brethren increases, and the love of many waxes cold, as is remarkably the case in our day: and as we oftentimes find also in scripture dissatisfaction, murmuring, &c. arising in the heart of godly men, for the seeming irregular distribution of Providence among them, whereby good men are oftentimes in distress, and surrounded on all sides with wants, straits, and difficulties; and know not what hand to turn to procure an honest living, through bearing, as they would have it, to do good, according to their principles, when at the same time, ungodly men flourish, spread themselves like a green bay tree, as if God loved to encourage wicked men, more than those that faithfully serve and obey him: and what shall we say touching these things? surely there is no unrighteousness with God? for the disposer of every event, has revealed his mind concerning this thing, with a gentle reproof, charging his afflicted people with partiality for this way of judging; *Mal. iii. 13—15*. Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord; yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is in vain to observe God, and what profit

62 THE FOURTH SEAL OPENED. Ch.vi.

profit is it, that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts? and now we call the proud happy, yea, they that work wickedness are set up, yea, they that tempt God, are even delivered. Nevertheless, it is a true saying, like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, for whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth; if we be without chastisement, says the apostle, whereof all are partakers, then are we bastards, and not sons, *Heb. xii. 8.* Nothing here speaks of hatred in God to his people, but in love, and therefore every true believer at all times, and in every circumstance of life, have great cause to rejoice, because the promise is, That all things shall work together for their good, *Rom. viii.* and it is only for a very little while in a state of imperfection, that God will, in any degree, afflict his chosen people; and when he visits his backslidden children with stripes, it for their profit, that they might be partakers of his holiness, and thereby purify them from the dross of sin, and after they are tried, they come forth as gold, made vessels of honour, set up for their Master's use; and here they say, with David, it is good for them that they were afflicted, for before, they went astray, but now they will keep God's word. Secondly, The people of God have great cause to rejoice in every trying circumstance, because in the hardest dispensations of Providence, there are something given unto them from Christ that will

Ch. vi. THE FOURTH SEAL OPENED. 63

will sweeten all their bitter cups, for his grace is not only sufficient to keep them from falling away totally, but his strength is made perfect in weakness; this was what made the apostle Paul always rejoice in the cross of Christ, because he found more of Christ's power and wisdom, and of his special presence, when he was remarkably put to suffer for his cause, than at other times; for, when God taketh away any earthly enjoyment, that was a means to support a believer in a trying circumstance, he at the same time upholds him with his own right hand, that is, he honoureth him with a sensible manifestation of his own special presence, assuring him, that he is his shield, and his exceeding great reward; and with this his heart is filled with peace and joy, in believing, that let come of him what will, he is resolved to hold fast his integrity and live in submission to the will of God; and in such a case, the language of his heart will be, Good is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good in his sight.

And although God, for wise and holy ends, ordain heavy strokes of temporal calamity to befall the best of men in this life, whither by the dissolving of their estates, or suffering grievous afflictions in the body, either by pain or sickness, or the loss of near and dear friends and relations, as was the case with Job, after he was reduced to nothing, who became naked and destitute of all earthly comfort, yet the Lord his God did not leave him with miserable comforters (cursing the day of his birth) in a miserable situation,
where

64 THE FOURTH SEAL OPENED. Ch. vi.

where he found none to pity his case, nor grant him any relief, but raised him up again, more glorious and powerful and much greater even in the world than ever he was before; and what greater proofs can we desire in order to confirm us in our faith, than the word and promise of a God that cannot lie? who say, That all things shall work together for good to them that love him; therefore we may depend upon it, if we suffer with Christ, that is, if we suffer by doing our duty to him as he hath commanded us, we shall also reign with him; if we are cast down for his name's sake, he will raise us up; if we are wounded, he will heal us; if we are killed all the day long for holding the testimony of a good conscience, he will give us eternal life: why then should the Christian complain though his frail body fare hard, and toil long in a strange land, during his pilgrimage on the earth, since he may well assure himself, and know by a continued course of experience, that his soul, the greater part, receives advantage, infinitely more so than any loss that befall the body. Wherefore, says the apostle, For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day: for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 *Cor. iv. 16, 17.*

These plain truths of scripture, when compared with what hath been said of the event brought forth by the opening of the fourth seal, correspond

Ch. vi. THE FOURTH SEAL OPENED. 65

pond also with the fourth beast, that resembled the flying eagle, his surpassing loftiness in respect to the extensive and comprehensive views of divine things, as is briefly comprehended in the character given of the natural disposition and proper offices of his external form and bodily parts, his angelic appearance, in renewing of strength to the wearied, when nature's strength doth faint and fail, for in his ordinary course of visitation, he makes all glad within, where there is nothing but sadness and sorrow without; and, he is never more ready to help or relieve the destitute, than when all human aids are denied them, and when hopes of relief begin to perish. This is the character proper to the fourth beast that resembled the flying eagle; his gracious invitation to come and see the wonders of God's love and mercy, through a crucified Saviour, made manifest to the faithful at the opening of the fourth seal, when the church remarkably was in great distress, signified by the appearance of the pale horse, with the name of the rider, &c. abundantly justify this character. All which plainly demonstrate, and sufficiently prove the truth of what hath been said on the opening of the seals particularly, and in the opening of the mystery of the four beasts, where it appears that the four beasts, or living creatures, are representations of the gifts and graces of the sanctifying spirit, treasured up in the person of Christ, and ready to be applied to his church in every time of need.

The

66 THE FIFTH SEAL OPENED. Chap. vi.

The Fifth Seal opened.

Verſes 9, 10, 11. And when he had opened the fifth ſeal, I ſaw under the altar the ſouls of them that were ſlain for the word of God and for the teſtimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, ſaying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was ſaid unto them, that they ſhould reſt yet for a little ſeaſon, until their fellow-ſervants alſo, and their brethren that ſhould be killed as they were, ſhould be fulfilled.

In the opening of this fifth ſeal, no mention is made of a horſe of a different colour, nor a word ſpoken concerning the four beaſts, as at the opening of the four former ſeals; the reaſon is (as I perceive) becauſe that as the trial of the church under this ſeal was no new thing, no change is made in regard to outward circumſtances, but continue the ſame as before, without any viſible appearance of relief; for the opening of the fourth ſeal brought forth death and hell, or ſuch as made a covenant with hell, in order to deſtroy the Chriſtians, to ſee if it was poſſible to cut them off both root and branch; and for this, Chriſt their exalted head furniſhed them with every neceſſary angelic qualities, as a manifeſt token of his own gracious preſence; and as he was with the three children in the miſt of
the

Chap. vi. THE FIFTH SEAL OPENED. 67

the burning fiery furnace, *Dan. iii. 25.* surely he was, he is, and will be to the end of the world, with his people in the midst of all their hard trials and sufferings, taking care that not so much as one hair of their heads should perish on his account. So that all the disadvantage true believers have by their hard trials in this world, is their being made holy; they are thereby purified more and more from the dross of sin, through the furnace of affliction, which is a great advantage; and after they are tried, then they come forth as gold purified seven times.

Let us now consider the words of the text, as they are to be explained; and we shall thereby be made to see what advantage the Christian church receive by the opening of this seal.

I saw (says John) the souls of them under the altar, that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.—The altar which John here typically alludes to, is that placed in the inner court of the priests, whereon the sacrifices were offered, according to custom under that dispensation, but have a special reference to the great sacrifice under the gospel (to wit) the death and sufferings of the Son of God; seeing it was impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats, should take away sins, *Heb. x. 4.* Above, when he said, sacrifice and offerings for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the law: then said he, lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second;

68 THE FIFTH SEAL OPENED. Chap. vi.

second; by the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, *Heb. x. 9, 10.* These words held forth a disanulling of the first covenant, that there might be room for establishing the second; and as Christ the testator of the covenant of grace has left it as a part of his lagacies, that as he himself suffered for his people, on account of sin in them, which he took upon himself; so those also for whom he suffered (when called to it) were to seal the truths of Christ with their blood; for unto you (says the apostle) it is given not only to believe on his name, but also to suffer for his sake, *Phil. i. 29.* Hence it is, that the souls which John saw under the altar, signify a persecuting state, or the Christian church under persecution; and therefore they do err who believe these souls under the altar to be the souls of the martyrs after they depart this life, entering into a state of purification; for the souls of believers after death, immediately enter into a state of eternal rest; for blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them, *Rev. xiv. 13.* And the apostle Paul says, We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens, *2 Cor. v.* So that it is plain, that after the dissolution of the body the souls of believers go to heaven, and there to be for ever with the Lord; and to shew that this was the

Chap. vi. THE FIFTH SEAL OPENED. 69

the apostle's meaning of these words, he makes it clear in the words that follow, verse 8. We are confident, I say, and willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. He rather desired the desolation of his body by death, than to continue in the flesh, that his soul might go to heaven and there to be present with Christ his Lord. Therefore these souls under the altar, are the lives of the martyrs taken away or slain, which cry for vengeance on their persecutors, who suffered under the third and fourth seals.—Justice loudly cried for this, the word of God spoke for it, yea, the providence of God, and the poor afflicted church in those days at the opening of the fifth seal, who witnessed a good confession to the truths of Christ in the midst of their sorrows, they also with a loud voice cried forth for vengeance, how long, O Lord, holy and true, doth thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? Here it is said that they cried with a loud voice, which seems as they were importunate in earnest and public prayers by the whole Christian church, on account of the grievous persecution: for the loud voice sheweth the universality thereof; it extended to every Christian congregation throughout all the empire, and elsewhere through the world, where there was but two or three gathered together, they poured out their prayers to almighty God on this occasion. This loud voice also imports the long continuance of their sufferings under this seal, perhaps longer than the time

F

under

under the other four seals before it ; and therefore the poor sufferers cried with a loud voice, saying, how long, &c. The faithful witnesses of Jesus, no doubt, expected to meet with a favourable hearing of their prayers long before, according to that promise which says, Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart ; commit thy way unto him, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass ; and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon day, *Psal.* xxxvii. Thus their hearts were fixed on the faithfulness of God, relying on his word, which says, that the wicked shall be cut off, but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. Now the faithful under this seal calling into remembrance former grievances, and seeing the storms that were hanging over their heads, they cried with a loud voice, saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true, doth thou not judge ? These are the words which holds out the prayers of the Christian church, whilst under persecution of Roman emperors ; which prayers was put up to God, in the name of Christ, who is holy and true, and who in righteousness doth judge, as the words imports : and for an answer to their humble request we have the following words : verse 11, And white robes were given unto every one of them ; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Chap. vi. THE FIFTH SEAL OPENED. 71

filled. In this answer to their prayer, two things are to be considered, first, the white robes that was given to every one of them: secondly, and that they were to rest yet for a little season, before God would avenge their blood on their persecutors.

For this, we are to observe in general, that the white robes here spoken of is some invaluable gift bestowed, and is of the same nature to that which the four beasts or living creatures had discovered of Christ's fulness, by means of opening the former seals; and this lets us see farther, that the end for which Christ opened the seals is to manifest his faithfulness to his church; for those white robes certainly were given to keep up their hearts, to press forward towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; as also, it was something given to strengthen them to undergo with patience, what God in his wisdom was pleased to lay upon them; this is evident, because no other kind of robes or suits of apparel would suit the circumstance of souls slain under the altar; for as long as those continue under the altar, so long doth the church continue in a persecuting state; and it doth not hold that this apparent gift, signified by the white robes, were any thing inferior to that which was given of Christ's fulness in those trying circumstances that went before at the opening of the second, the third, and fourth seals; for as the church is advanced in stature, (to wit) in knowledge and experience by the opening of

the seals, a proportionable measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ must succeed; and in such a case a more full and glorious manifestation of the power of Christ's kingdom may be depended upon. Now, white robes are badges of honour and marks of distinction; seeing it is the wearing apparel used by kings when they attend their office as such, in judging causes set before them; for when our Saviour was suffering for our sins by the hands of wicked men, we are told they put on him a purple robe (resembling that of scarlet) and this, not in token of any honour done to him, but by way of mockery, that they might the more put him to open shame, because he confessed the truth, namely, that he himself was the king of the Jews; but the robes here spoken of were not of a bloody colour, as scarlet is. But white robes were given unto every one of those souls under the altar; now white is an emblem of innocence, and of truth and righteousness, because no other colour can set forth that character in a more clear light; therefore the white robes signify an eminent discovery of God's faithfulness, with respect to the accomplishment of his promises; as it is said, The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant, *Psal.* xxv. 14. And this eminent discovery of God's love and mercy and peculiar favour through a Redeemer, were made manifest to those souls under the altar in a three-fold light. First, Assurance of God's love and mercy through a Redeemer,

Chap. vi. THE FIFTH SEAL OPENED. 73

deemer, not as absolutely necessary to evince the truth of their fidelity, or of their being in the faith of God's elect, for saving faith may exist, and truly can subsist without this assurance. Secondly, Immediate revelation given by the spirit of prophecy. Thirdly, Signs of the times given them to observe that their redemption draweth nigh.

And to shew that this eminent discovery of God's faithfulness to the Church were made good in those days when this fifth seal was opened, is what I now shall endeavour to make clear.

In the first place, I am led to observe, that assurance of God's love is of the benefits that flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, as it is in the Assembly's Catechism, which was composed by the reverend assembly of divines: and although we cannot affirm that this faith of assurance is at all times common to every believer, yet we may say with a warrant, that it is not only attainable in this life, but that it is also common to every believer that is willing to part with all things for Christ's sake and the gospel's; for the white robes given to every one of those souls under the altar, implies no less than this, and our Saviour is positive in confirming the truth of this doctrine, *Mark* x. 28, 29, 30. Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee: and Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children,

74 THE FIFTH SEAL OPENED. Chap. vi.

dren, or lands for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold. Now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life. All which abundantly verifies that an entrance were ministered (in a great degree) to those souls under the altar, into the everlasting kingdom of Christ, by the which they were advanced to the dignity of judges, even to judge the world, and to inherit the earth, in order to rule over their oppressers; although they had not this yet in actual possession, yet they were well assured of its being made good to them at the time appointed by the Father: but in the mean while as a manifest token of God's love, and of the innocence of that cause they suffered for, he gives them the spirit of adoption, whereby they were enabled to cry, Abba, Father: hereby they had the witness in themselves, God's Spirit witnessing with their spirits that they were of that blessed number whom the Lord hath justified, adopted, and sanctified: sanctified I say, in part, because yet they are under the altar; by which they are purified more and more, waiting for the glory that was to be revealed, even the redemption of the purchased possession of their promised inheritance. To this purpose the apostle sets forth the suffering state of the whole church of God, as it was from the beginning to his time, *Rom. viii. 22, 23.* For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now: and not

Chap. vi. THE FIFTH SEAL OPENED. 75

not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the spirit; even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

In the second place, I am to shew, that those souls under the altar had to them given immediate revelation by the spirit of prophecy.

This is clear by what is said as an answer to their prayer, in as much as it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled: these words contain a prophecy to the Christians, even at the opening of the fourth and fifth seals, a foretelling of things to come, relating to some special future events that should be fulfilled in the opening of the next or sixth seal; as it is said they were to rest yet for a little season, or which is the same, to be patient under their afflicting circumstances a little space longer, until others of their fellow servants, their Christian brethren, should also suffer in the same way; and although John had this revealed to him before the opening of the fifth seal, for the benefit of the church in general, yet in as much as this was given as an answer to their prayers, who suffered under this fifth seal; this revelation therefore were given immediately to them in particular; for the words are plain of themselves, and easy to be understood, in that it was said unto them, even them that were under the fifth seal, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their

76 THE FIFTH SEAL OPENED. Chap. vi.

fellow servants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

The next thing I have to consider, is, who it was that told them that they were to continue a little season in their persecuting state, before God would avenge them of their adversaries: whether it was spoken by an angel of God from heaven, or by a minister of the gospel. I answer, it was revealed to them by the Spirit of prophecy, and therefore by the Spirit of Christ only. It was the Lord Jesus Christ, their exalted head, that gave this answer to their petitions; Christ, God-man in one, was the object of their prayer; he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth; it was he, I say, that answered their request; for it is the Lamb of God that openeth the seals, and it is he that revealed this secret to his persecuted members, in order to strengthen them to bear with patience what his church had farther to undergo; it was the same Lord Jesus who once was dead, but is now alive, and behold he liveth for evermore, and has the keys of hell and of death, who ascended upon high, and led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men; yea, it was he that sent the spirit of adoption into their hearts, whereby they were enabled to cry, Abba, Father, in their address to him in prayer, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood, &c. he it was that gave answer, they must rest yet a little season,

season, &c. and this was fulfilled after that little season was over, at the opening of the sixth seal, when Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor, took the kingdom and advanced the Christians, to the downfall of their cruel persecutors, as shall be further explained in the opening of the next seal; and herein is the mystery of this seal opened up, in as much as it is a plain discovery of God's faithfulness to his church, God manifesting himself to the faithful, assuring them that he himself was their God, revealing to them his secret purposes by the spirit of prophecy.

Signs of the Times.

When our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ made his first appearance in our lower world, as it is written of him by the prophets; it was generally expected that the kingdom of the Messiah should appear, and therefore when the fore-runner of Christ, (John the Baptist) heard of his mighty works, he sent two of his disciples to Christ, saying, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them: and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me, *Matt. xi. 3—6.*

And

And when the Christian church first was formed by the seventy disciples, sent forth to preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, the Jews had the first offers of the riches of God's grace through a crucified Redeemer, but the scheme of redemption seemed not at all suitable to the most polite part of that nation, who expected a Messiah after their own heart, not only to establish them in the belief of a temporal deliverance, such as should set them free, far above all other nations, but that their stated privileges and worldly sanctuary should remain unshaken for ever, as they could entertain no other persuasion than that they themselves, as a people, were the only proper objects of God's peculiar favour.

The proclamation of a crucified Redeemer, first in the sign of water baptism and repentance unto life, preached by John the baptist, in the wilderness; and the doctrine of the cross by Christ himself, must needs be highly offensive to the Jews who thought themselves well enough qualified without it: and after Christ had given many singular proofs of himself to be the sent and promised Messiah, they utterly rejected both he and all his wonderful works to their own destruction, and therefore they stumbled at that stumbling stone, and was broken according to the prediction of Christ in telling his disciples of the signs of the times, of the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, which was given as the light of five days in one to the church, at the opening of the fifth seal, to assure them that it should

not

Chap. vi. THE SIXTH SEAL OPENED. 79

not be long before God would bring down the powers of their cruel persecutors; especially since all that Christ has foretold concerning the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem were already fulfilled, before the opening of the fifth seal; and this in the same manner as he foretold it should be, in a deplorable circumstance, like unto the end of the world, even the day of judgment; which was a true sign thereof, in regard to the Jewish state and worldly sanctuary, for it was the last day of the Jewish oblation, their stated privileges and worldly sanctuary was destroyed at once, with a visible mark of God's displeasure, although they did not in the least expect it. Now what greater signs could then be given to those poor persecuted Christians at the opening of the fifth seal, in order to confirm them in their belief of being soon delivered from the tyranny of heathen Rome, and to take it for granted, that as the powers of unbelieving Jews were already destroyed who crucified their Lord and Master, as Christ himself foretold it should be so, should heathen emperors with the same visible mark of his displeasure as the Lord said, whosoever falleth on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

The Sixth Seal opened.

Verses 12 — 17. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a
great

80 THE SIXTH SEAL OPENED. Chap. vi.

great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind: And the heaven departed as a scrowl when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains: And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

We come now to the opening of the sixth seal, which extraordinary event is likened to the day of judgment, because it was a great day, a terrible day of the Lord, according to the words of the prophet, a day of gloominess and of darkness, a day of thick darkness, *Joel* ii. It was a day of God's vengeance, and the year of recompence for the controversy of Zion, *Isai.* xxxiv. 8. It was a day of God's fearful anger in pouring out his fury upon the heathens that know him not, and upon the families that called not upon his name; for as much as they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him,
and

Chap. vi. THE SIXTH SEAL OPENED. 81

and has made his habitation desolate, *Jer. x. 25.* It was a day of reckoning with Roman emperors for the wrongs they have done to the cause and interest of Christ, for killing and destroying the Christians for no other crime, but because they were found faithful to their calling, for obeying God rather than men; and therefore the blood of those martyrs who suffered for bearing a testimony to the truths of Christ, under the third, the fourth, and fifth seals, were required of that generation; for the time was come, when God avenged the blood of those souls that were slain under the altar, on their cruel persecutors. Now as to the meaning of these words by which we have a discovery of the sixth seal, cannot literally be understood of the last day of judgment, neither can it properly be applied to any other period of time, but only the time and circumstance of the destruction of the old Roman empire, as it was governed by heathen emperors. The great earthquake signify the sudden overthrow of that power, by the total defeat in the wars they were engaged in, and the remarkable desolation that that sudden change has brought upon many of the inhabitants. The sun to become black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon to become as blood, denotes the disannulling of old laws and statutes, by which the whole order of their stated privileges were brought to confusion, attended with grievous and lamentable calamities, like to that woeful situation of the reprobates at the end of the world, when God destroys and brings
a total

82 THE SIXTH SEAL OPENED. Chap. vi.

a total change upon the whole fabrick of the universe; as it is said, that the stars of heaven fell into the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. Stars in scripture, sometimes signify ministers of the gospel, and sometimes they signify ministers of state, as may be gathered by comparing these scripture texts together, *Rev. i. 20.* with *Isaiab xiv. 12—15.* Now, what is said here of the stars that fell from heaven into the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely fruit, &c. cannot be understood of the ministers of the gospel, as if they were fallen from heaven, or from a state of happiness into a state of more misery; this will not agree with the event of these times, when the sixth seal was opened, for every protestant expositor that ever I could meet, with one voice agree, that when the sixth seal was opened, Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor, took the kingdom and advanced the Christians, to the downfall of all their cruel persecutions. So that, instead of their being fallen from heaven, (as some has expounded this passage) it might rather be said that ministers of the gospel were exalted into heaven when this seal was opened; and this will prove true if we understand this figurative expression, as, indeed, it ought not to be literally meant of heaven, but metaphorically, that is, such a heaven upon earth as the power of government have settled among men; therefore the stars here spoken of must mean ministers of state
losing

Chap. vi. THE SIXTH SEAL OPENED. 38

losing their authority, falling from their high and honourable station into low and mean circumstances in the world, as the most despicable tools of contempt; or as the unclean vagabonds of the earth, that would not enter into the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffer others to go in that would; wandering stars, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever, who, in the time of their prosperity were as a fig-tree bearing figs, but now their goodly fruits, their fair hopes, and comfortable circumstances in the world, are all at once cast down to the ground as by an untimely blow of a violent tempest. It is said, that the heavens departed as a scrawl when it is rolled together; heaven here, must signify the stated privileges of these times, vanished away, or drawn into a narrower compass, like unto a scrawl of a book, which before was open at full width, now shut up, or rolled together, as if there was to be no more use for these things. By the mountains and the islands moved out of their places, we are to understand a change in the government from paganism to Christianity, from the stated principles of infidels, to the maintaining of the Christian faith; now paganism and infidelity were abolished, and the religion of Jesus Christ were by law established, for which kings became nursing fathers, and queens became nursing mothers to Zion's children, that truth and righteousness might flourish in the earth, and the Mediator's kingdom enlarged, and the adversaries thereof subdued, that so the implacable enemies of

Christ

84 THE SIXTH SEAL OPENED. Chap. vi.

Christ might more and more be forced to bow, and be made his foot-stool. It is said, that the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man hid themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains.

Here the kings of the earth, the heathen emperors, and their nobles, their chief rulers, and deputy governors, their mighty warriors, and officers of all ranks and degrees, whether they were bond or free, whether they were freeholders or tenants, whether they could claim a right to the common privileges as free men at Rome, or strangers in bondage, whether they entered into a league to destroy the Christians, or at liberty to act according to the rules of reason and human sympathy, they now begin to feel the weight of Christ's power for the wrongs they have done to his persecuted brethren, and members of his mystical body. Their misery, which, by degrees, were carried on by the wars they were engaged in, is now come to a head in their total defeat, by the compleat victory obtained by Constantine the Great; they hide themselves in dens and rocks of the mountains: now their eyes were opened, and they saw themselves naked, they were ashamed and confounded for their former course of wickedness, and would, if it were possible, hide themselves in dens and rocks of the mountains; they would be glad, by some means or other, if but in disguise, to creep

Chap. vi. THE SIXTH SEAL OPENED. 85

creep into any hole like filthy vermin, so as they could have any shelter under the covert of Christ's wings, with a hypocritical confession made of his name, say to the rocks and to the mountains, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Now they were deeply sensible of the wrongs they had done to the innocent Lamb of God, and therefore that day was come, when the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost. They verily have found, that there is a God that judges in the earth, and that this God judges righteous judgment, therefore they begin with horror to lament their sad case, being convicted by their own consciences, that they were guilty and condemned criminals, finding it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; and therefore they cry to the hills and to the mountains to fall upon them, and hide them; like guilty Adam and his wife, after they sinned against God, they saw themselves naked and destitute of every good thing which they before had enjoyed; when the Lord God came walking in the garden in the cool of the day, they began to hide themselves amongst the trees of the garden; their consciences then accused them, and therefore said, they were afraid to hear God's voice, *Gen. iii. 10.* So likewise did those miserable wretches, after they found themselves naked and destitute, cry to the mountains and hills to cover them, vainly imagining to hide themselves from God, or find out some means to stop the mouth of conscience,

G

which

which filled them with horror and despair, without any hopes of mercy; seeing there remained no more sacrifices, no more offers of the gospel, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation that should utterly consume and destroy the adversary; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand. When the Lord God enters into judgment with ungodly men, or visits a sinful nation with the rod of his wrath, who can stand before him, or be able to answer for one of many thousands.

REVELATION, Chap. vii.

Verses 1, 2, 3. And after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their fore heads.

There are three sorts of angels spoken of in scripture; the first of these are the elect angels, who continually rejoice in a perfect state of happiness, beholding the face of God in heaven; and

it may be gathered from sundry passages of scripture, that there are degrees of glory amongst them, whom the apostle calls ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, *Heb. i. 14.* The second sort are fallen angels, or evil spirits, the same as devils, of whom one is a chief, who is called Beelzebub, or Satan, the grand enemy of mankind, he fell as lightening from heaven; as it is said, they kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, whom God hath reserved in everlasting chains of darkness, unto the judgment of the great day, *Jude 6.*

The third are angels mystical, that is, not only the joint testimony of men, but men themselves are called angels, on account of their being instruments of providence commissioned by a special act of providential call, in order to put in execution any affairs belonging to church or state, either for the better establishing of the same, or tending to its final overthrow; and this latter sort are the four angels as above-mentioned. Now it is plain, by what is said of the four beasts, or four living creatures in the preceeding chapter, that the number four always in this book, denote some certain fulness; therefore we may conclude that the four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds, &c. are the powers of the Roman empire, after it became Christian, as it is said, after these things, that is, after the old Roman empire was destroyed, or the powers of the stated privileges of heathen Rome brought down, and their glory

88 OF THE ANGEL ASCENDING Ch. vii.

laid in the dust, as has been already shewn, and the state affairs of the Christian religion happily was ordered and settled for some time, effected by the first Christian emperor; it seems as if there was a fresh general counsel held over all the empire, in order to put a stop to all disquietous or factious troubles that might be set on foot, either by themselves, through the prevailency of various opinions concerning the right settlement of church government, &c. Or for fear of an invasion from foreign countries, which is here compared to the blowing of the winds, and which the four angels, the instruments of providence, or the whole powers collectively of the Roman empire was to prevent, that it might not put a stop to the growth of the Christian religion in general, until matters were to be settled in such a manner, as there might appear a visible distinction between the true and false religion.

The other angel that ascended from the east, having the seal of the living God, as it is expressed in the second verse, who cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, is, Constantine the Great; he it was, that adorned the city of Constantinople, and made the same his chief place of residence, situated east from Rome, and afterwards inhabited by the Turks, and to this day is the seat of the Grand Signior. He, ascending from the east, was exalted to the Imperial authority

authority to reign and rule in favour of the Christian religion, he having the seal of the living God, that is, having embraced the faith of Jesus, was baptized in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which is called a seal of the covenant of grace, and therefore a seal of the living God; which seal none of all the other emperors before him ever received: he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea; he publicly confessed, and extended his Christian beneficence far and wide, even unto all the ends and corners of the earth and seas; and as a nursing father to Zion's children, he maintained their rights, and under Christ, supported them with such helps as was necessary to withstand the storms and tempests that were to rise from foreign countries; thus he cried, with a loud voice, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads; as much as to say, let all things remain unmolested, according to the stated privileges in favour of the Christians, which are established by undeniable authority in the Roman empire, until there should appear a visible distinction between the true and false religion.

Verſes 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. And I heard the number of them which were ſealed: and there were ſealed an hundred and forty and four thouſand, of all the tribes of the children of Iſrael. Of the tribe of Judah were ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the

90 OF THE SEALED NUMBER. Ch. vii.

tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand,

Every Christian man who made himself any ways acquainted with the scriptures, cannot but perceive that the number here, which were sealed of all the tribes of Israel ought not literally be so understood; and therefore the truth and meaning of the words are to be found out, by observing the connection there is between their types and anti-types. This is a truth worthy of our acknowledgement, that there were many of God's servants under the law, from Abraham to Christ, who were, and very justly might be reckoned as eminent types of the Messiah to come; such were Melchizedec, the prophet Jonah, Isaac and Jacob, David, and Solomon, &c. and therefore it is agreeable to the scriptures to hold, that the sons of Jacob, of whom sprang the twelve tribes of Israel, were types of the twelve apostles, chosen as the apostles of Jesus Christ. Now the offspring of the twelve sons of Jacob, in the order as they are

Ch. vii. OF THE SEALED NUMBER. 91

are above-named, were the twelve tribes of Israel, but the offspring of the holy and inspired apostles were Christian believers, though no mention is made in the New Testament of a definite number of believing persons, except this only, which is an allegorical speech, Twelve is the root of an hundred and forty-four, which make up the number that were sealed, which is here stated by way of eminence, mystically shewing a great increase of converted persons; for as the visible church in old times were limited to the nation of the Jews, consisting of twelve tribes, so the New Testament church also, during the three first centuries, were limited to a few out of many nations; but when Christianity was established by law in the earth, we must needs think that Christian believers, for some time, daily were added to the church. Now the sealing of those in their foreheads is their being actually received, supported, and encouraged in their Christian behaviour by the civil law, as well as by that of the ecclesiastic, to the intent that it might appear in after ages a visible distinction between Christ's faithful people, and those that received the mark of the beast in their foreheads and in their hands; and as twelve is a number frequently taken and made use of in the holy scriptures, to denote eminence, as twelve tribes, twelve patriarchs, twelve apostles, and twelve hours to complete the day-light of gospel truths, so that the number which were sealed of different tribes signify, not only a great increase of Chris-

tian believers, received unto favours by the civil powers, but also an increase of grace or blessings accompanying every different gift or gifts flowing from one and the same spirit, divided to every one according to their faith.

Verſes 9, 10, 11, 12. After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, ſtood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Salvation to our God which ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels ſtood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beaſts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worſhipped God, Saying, Amen: Bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

This extraordinary viſion of the great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, &c. is a manifeſtation of the glorious coming of Chriſt's kingdom on earth, when there ſhall be an univerſal gathering of the people of God, out of all the nations of the earth, at that great and glorious time, when both Jews and Gentiles ſhall be united, making one ſheep-fold under one ſhepherd, which extraordinary event is to have its accompliſhment upon the ruin of Myſtery Babylon, after it is deſtroyed, and no ſooner, for what is ſaid towards the end of this chapter can-

not

Ch. vii. NO MAN COULD NUMBER. 93

not be applied to any other period; for, during the time of anti-christ's reign, the twelve thousand which were sealed of every tribe (as has been already explained) were again reduced to a few witnesses clothed in sackcloth, *Rev. xi. 9.* who prophesied 1260 days, or as many years, the time that the beast prevailed over the saints, and over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, chap. xiii. 7. for as twelve multiplied in itself holds out many, or a great increase of Christian believers, so the two witnesses that prophesied must signify a few in comparison, but in these words, verse 9. as is said after these things, that is, after the hundred and forty and four thousand were sealed, I looked, said John, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb. By the throne here, I take it to signify the power of judging, or a power to judge righteous judgment, according to law reckoning, maintained by those that have the testimony of Jesus. Their standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, sheweth that they were earnest in the pursuit of truth according to the word, having the glory of God, the interest of the Mediator's kingdom before their eyes. It is added, they were clothed in white robes and palms in their hands. As white is an emblem of innocence, integrity, and uprightness, see chap. iii. and iv. and robes are badges of honour and marks of distinction, for those

94 OF THE ANGELS STANDING Ch. vii.

those especially who sit in king's courts, so palms in men's hands is a token of victory. All this to shew when the glory of the Mediator's kingdom shall appear in its strength; then the redeemed of the Lord shall be gathered out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, cloathed with the garment of joy and gladness, going forth, through the captain of their salvation, conquering and to conquer, till at last they obtain a complete victory over the powers of darkness. It is said they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. As the word salvation is an expression of joy and consolation for those to whom it is bestowed, and a note of admiration to raise in them a grateful sense of God's love and tender mercy, who hath thus redeemed, and set them free from the slavery of sin and Satan, therefore it is put here to celebrate the praises of God, the judge of all, and of Christ the Lamb of God, who hath washed them from their sins in his own blood, and magnified his great name in all the earth, in fulfilling his promises to the church as to the angels, which is said, that stood round about the throne, and round about the four beasts and the elders. Our commentators generally are of the opinion that they are the angels of God in heaven, joining with the glorified saints in praising of God. Allowing this to be the proper exercise of the glorified saints and the angels of God in heaven, yet no reason can be given why this great company of angels should be

be taken in the plain literal sense, more than any other part of this book of the Revelation, which is all figurative; every one must confess that almost every sentence of the book of the Revelation has a meaning of a different light than as it plainly and simply speaks, except so much as what John himself has expounded, which was given to those that have ears to hear, or heart to conceive what the Spirit saith to the churches, I say, given as a key to open or unfold all the other dark passages thereof, for he plainly tells us, *Rev. i. 20.* That the mysteries of the seven stars in the right hand of Christ were the angels of the seven churches of Asia, and the seven golden candlesticks were the seven churches; he tells us also, that the ten horns of the beast that had seven heads, were ten kings, and the woman which was seen drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, were the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth, chap. xvii. For as the prophets of old who used similitudes, and our Saviour himself who fulfilled the law, spoke by parables, borrowed words from earthly things, to shew forth some faint resemblance of heavenly, because that the thing signified (to wit,) the heavenly things themselves could not be seen but through types and figures, until the time should come when the shadows were to flee away at the appearance of the substance, in the bringing in of the antitypes under the gospel dispensation; and although the apostle Paul, who used great plainness of speech, and who

who had the sight of the third heaven, yet he confessed that the glory of heaven could not be seen in a state of imperfection, but through a glass darkly, *1 Cor. xiii. 12.* By which we learn, that until we be made perfect in a state of glory, it is necessary we should see through a glass, or otherwise we see not. We do not understand the language of the holy scriptures, and indeed, if we understand it not, we cannot believe it, nor regard it as a rule of life; this our Saviour himself has taught, as we may perceive in his discourse to Nicodemus concerning the doctrine of his new birth, saying, If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? *John iii. 12.* And as no man can deny that every thing hitherto spoken of is concerning the church on earth, or the kingdom of Christ on earth, and not simply of that in heaven above, and therefore what is said of the angels standing round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, are to be understood of men invested with authority to judge, rule, govern, &c. such as ministers of state, or magistrates of cities, towns, boroughs, &c. The reason that may be given why they are called angels is, to distinguish them from the ecclesiastical order, as the four beasts and the elders (through all this book) represents. Though these be separate in respect to their office, yet they are united in the worshipping of God, they stand round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts. As
the

the holy angels of God in heaven are said to be all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, so it is the business of a truly wise and upright ruler who bear the image of an angel, to be earnest in the discharge of his duty to the meanest saint upon earth; and here they stand round about the throne judging righteous judgment; they stand about the elders, and about the four beasts, signifying, that they are as a wall of defence round about mount Zion, which is the church of the living God; they study the safety and interest of the whole Christian church in general, and highly regard or esteem the riches of God's grace in particular: and for this they may be compared to the angels of God in heaven; wherefore, says the Psalmist, Bless the Lord, ye his angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure, *Psal.* ciii. 20, 23.

Again, it is said, they fell down on their faces and worshipped God:—it well becomes all those that be cloathed with authority, to shew forth a good example before the people, to come with the profoundest reverence, and with the deepest humility, unto the throne of grace, and pray for a blessing upon their lawful undertaking, that it may be crowned with success, as it is essential to the very being of a Christian to set up the worship of God; first, in his own heart; 2dly, in his closet; 3dly, in publick assemblies; so it is essential

sential to a master of a family, or any ruler of the people, to encourage the same as far as their abilities may extend, that the life and power of the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ may have free course, and prosper in the world, and all to join together, as with one heart and one mouth, praising and blessing God for ever more, as the angels do in heaven, saying, Amen, blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto God for ever and ever.

This shall be the language (both in heart and in life) of all the redeemed of the Lord, that shall be gathered out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, to reign and rule in that new heaven and the new earth promised in the latter days; and for that blessed and glorious hope which we wait and look for, we are taught as the disciples of Christ, to pray for the hastening of it, saying, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven, Amen and Amen.

Verses 13, 14, 15. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest: And he said unto me, these are they that came out of great tribulation, and has washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and

Chap. vii. AND ONE OF THE ELDERS. 99

and he that sit on the throne shall dwell amongst them.

This discourse that passed between one of the elders and the apostle, is a figurative speech, because that the four and twenty elders (as has been shewn, pages 22, 23, 24, &c.) are not literally so to be understood; as if they were so many certain persons, but rather are to be taken for so many distinct evidences attested by indefinite number of believing persons, that thereby the truth of scripture evidences might appear by degrees like the morning light that shineth more and more until the perfect day; the whole therefore is spoken in a figure to represent the wonderful displays of divine truths, when this prophecy is to be fulfilled: the question is first put to John by one of the elders, saying, what are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? the apostle answered, Sir, thou knowest: by which we see that the elder knew very well what he before seemed to know not; and this that he might the more fully express his sentiments concerning that wonderful œconomy, goodness, and providence of God in fulfilling his promises to the church. These are they (says the elder) that came out of great tribulation, and has washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, &c. But to make the truth appear more clear touching this reply of the elder, it is necessary we should consider that the apostle oftentimes in this book is typically represented as the person standing in the room of
the

the whole Christian church; and the elder, as it were a member of the same, advanced in place in the kingdom of Christ, declaring God's faithfulness in the accomplishment of his promises to the church.

They came out of great tribulation: the scope is, the faithful people of God who always suffered for bearing a testimony to the truths of Christ from the beginning, now at length obtain a complete victory over the powers of darkness. Behold, the militant church is changed into a triumphant; they have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb by means of spiritual exercise; they have purified their hearts in Christ's blood, which was shed for the remission of sin; by which guilt was removed, their sins pardoned, their persons justified, and their sincere endeavours to walk uprightly, were accepted as the righteousness of just persons; therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell amongst them.—These are words borrowed from the manner of serving God in the temple of Jerusalem under the law of Moses, in order to represent the state of the Christian church; for that innumerable multitude which were cloathed in white robes, and palms in their hands, are here again said to serve him (God) day and night in his temple; that is, they were to serve God continually, according to the appointed means as he hath prescribed in his word, which implies that they were
never

never to backslide, or fall away from the truth any more; therefore it is said, he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell amongst them. Now he that sitteth on the throne is the Mediator of the new covenant; the Lord Jesus Christ, as king and head of his church, sitting on his Father's throne; for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, *Jahn v. 22, 23.*

Now Christ may be said to dwell among men two ways; first, in a most powerful and gracious manner: secondly, in a most powerful and glorious manner. First, Christ may be said to dwell among men, by being powerfully and graciously present with them by his Spirit, inclining their hearts to love his word, to love his ordinances, and to obey his commandments; he reigns and rules in the hearts of his people, making all things new after his own image: Christ, as he is God, is every where present; for although his bodily presence be in heaven (and there he must continue until the restitution of all things) yet his gracious presence is with his people upon earth; but God cannot be said to dwell with ungodly men, neither can it be said, that he is graciously present with them; for although he sees, and knows, and observes all their actions, and shall judge them accordingly, yet they have no fellowship with him: and his people also are commanded to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove
H them,

them, *Eph. v. 11*. Yet God truly may be said to dwell with his faithful people, because they are called his house, *1 Pet. ii. 5*. for the bodies of the saints is his temple, by whom he will be glorified; and their souls are made after God's likeness, in knowledge, in righteousness, and in holiness. They desire to know more and more of God, of themselves, and of their duties, that they may do and perform the same with a willing mind; after this manner God manifests himself to his people, in a way that the ungodly world knows nothing of, because Christ's word have no place in them; as we may see by the answer of Christ to one of his disciples, *John xiv. 22, 23*. Judas saith unto him, (not Iscariot) Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. But we cannot expect this gracious presence of Christ without the appointed means. It is true that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; for whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord, shall be saved; how then shall they call on him in whom they have believed? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? *Rom. x. 13—15*. Therefore, Christ truly may be said to dwell among men, by the setting up a standard of divine worship among them,

them, establishing the outward means whereby he communicates the benefits of redemption, and through the diligent use of the means of grace, which they have in observing all things he commanded them. God dwelleth in them, and they in him, and in so doing they have his word and promise, that he will be with them until the end of the world.

Again, Christ truly may be said to dwell among men in a most powerful and glorious manner:—there is a time promised when Christ will truly deliver his church from the powers of darkness, even here upon earth; and be exalted to the highest pitch of honour and preferment, from its present disconsolate and disquietous state, to an estate of peace, rest, and happiness, which is by the apostle called, the redemption of our body, *Rom. xiii. 11*, that is, the body of the militant church, redeemed from all the bondage and slavery of tyranny, which the same apostle says, have groaned and travailed in pains, from the beginning, until that prophecy shall be fulfilled, *Isaiab ii. 2*. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And this is that dwelling among men that is meant by what is said, that he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell amongst them. Now when all nations flow unto the mountain of the Lord's house,

Christ's kingdom on earth shall appear in its meridian brightness.

Verses 16, 17. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

To take these words literally, or in a proper sense, would be to talk plainly of that consummate happiness of the glorified saints in heaven, after the consummation of all things, when all the infirmities and faculties of human nature shall be done away : but as this (as well as the other part of the story) is a figurative speech, we are therefore to look upon the whole dialogue as spoken in reference to that glorious day when anti-christ utterly shall be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming, *2 Thess. ii. 1*. These words do exactly correspond with every part of the dialogue, as has been already explained ; for the description of the innumerable multitude which were cloathed with white robes, and palms in their hands, still continue ; we have heard before of their coming out of great tribulation, and of their obtaining a complete victory over the powers of darkness ; and now it is said, that they should neither hunger nor thirst, nor should any of them be exposed to the scorching heat of the sun any more ; of which we learn, that the suffering state of the Christian church shall have an

an end at the time appointed, even on this earth; for in the parable of the sower, *Matt. xiii. 3—8*. We find that persecution and tribulation are compared to the scorching heat of the sun; and here it is said, they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light upon them, nor any heat: all which hold out a peaceable happy state that shall never have an end; wherefore it is said, that the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, &c. The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne is the Lord Jesus Christ exalted unto his Father's throne, as king and head of his church, who feeds his flock like a shepherd, he takes care that his followers should have abundance of every thing necessary to make them completely happy; he will give grace now, and glory hereafter; no good thing will he withhold from the upright in heart; he is that living bread which came down from heaven, which was broken for men, that they might eat thereof (by faith) and live for ever, and so be delivered from death spiritual and eternal; he is that tree of life planted in the midst of the Paradise of God, whose leaves (the preaching of the word) are good for the healing of the nations. The living fountains of water unto which he leads his flock, are the gifts, the graces, the joys, and comforts of the Holy Ghost, flowing from God the fountain of all life communicated to believers through the channel of the word: this in short is the scope

and meaning of the words, as we may see it plainly described, *John* vii. 38. He that believeth on me, says Christ, as the scriptures hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water : but this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him, should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified ; and through the whole we may very well observe the nearness of kin there is between the blessedness of the godly, even here upon earth, to the happiness of the saints in heaven, since it is compared to it ; for what is said literally of heaven in plain truths of scripture, is here to be taken figuratively, because all that are advanced is concerning the church on earth ; to this purpose the prophet *Isaiab* speaks in his foretelling the glory of the Messiah's kingdom : The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy, and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away, *Isai.* xxxv. 10. which exactly agrees with what is here said, (to wit) and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes : that is, God shall alter his former way of dealing with his people ; the militant church shall become triumphant, all things shall be made new, like heaven upon earth, a state or dispensation different than what was before, according to this saying, *Rev.* xxi. 2—4. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice

Chap. viii. SEVENTH SEAL OPENED. 107

voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and be their God: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

REVELATION, Chap. viii.

Verſes 1, 2. And when he had opened the ſeventh ſeal, there was ſilence in heaven about the ſpace of half an hour: And I ſaw the ſeven angels which ſtood before God, and to them were given ſeven trumpets.

We have heard by what is ſaid of the preceeding chapters, of a remarkable change in ſtate affairs, effected by Conſtantine the Great in favour of the Chriſtians; after that the powers of heathen Rome were brought down, and Chriſtianity eſtabliſhed by law; it was the firſt time the ſame was by undeniable authority maintained, owned and received by all ranks and degrees of perſons, as that one only neceſſary thing in order to qualify men to inherit eternal life.—By this the friends of the Chriſtian religion were highly regarded, honoured, and preferred, for inſtead of their being perſecuted as before, for confeſſing the name of Chriſt, they were generally highly favoured, for a great number of converts for ſome time were increaſed and added to the

church; and the Lord remarkably blessed his faithful people with stores of rich provision, both spiritual and temporal, as appears by the number that were sealed of all the tribes of Israel, by which peace and truth flourished, to the glory of the Mediator's kingdom; but this happy state of the Christians lasted but for a little while, by reason of a great dissension that arose amongst churchmen, partly on account of the Arian heresy, and partly concerning the settling of church government: this the apostle Paul plainly tells us of the day of Christ, or the glorious coming of his kingdom, but shall not come until there should be a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, *2 Thess.* ii. 3. for between the sealing of the hundred and forty four thousands, till the time that fresh wars broke out, we find it is compared to half an hour's silence in heaven, which signify a short space of time, in which peace and truth prospered; so that during the while of this little space of time, or universal peace, it is said, that seven angels with seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.

The seven angels which stood before God, to whom were given seven trumpets, is a metaphorical expression, not literally to be understood of the angels of God in heaven; nor should they be considered as so many distinct persons or agents, any other way than instruments of providence, whereby the events plainly may appear, according to the various circumstances of
the

the times when the seven angels sounded with their trumpets: and as the seven horns of the lamb signify Christ's kingly power, by which he executes the office of a king, or head of his church, and by seven horns we are to understand absolute power: so the seven angels sounding with their trumpets, proclaim his absolute sovereignty: and as the seven angels are said to stand before God, denotes them as appointed instruments of providence, or as sent messengers in God's over-ruling providence, by whom the event is made manifest; for as the opening of the seven seals by degrees manifest forth the riches of Christ's glorious grace in the saints; in like manner the seven angels sounding with their trumpets, proclaim his absolute sovereignty, particularly in ruling the affairs of state, that his faithfulness also, in respect to the accomplishment of his promises to the church, might be declared before angels and men.

Therefore the seven angels sounding with their trumpets, are so many distinct manifestations of Christ's over-ruling providence, effected by indefinite number of persons or agents, which certify, that his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and that all dominions shall serve and obey him, according to his word; and although Christ's kingdom, which is his church, during the first five trumpets seemed as if it had loosed ground instead of gaining; yet when the seventh angel soundeth, it is said, that the kingdoms of the world,

world, are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, chap. xi. 15.

Verses 3, 4. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand.

As the seven angels doth belong to Christ's kingly power, as has been already made clear; likewise this other angel that came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, &c. belongeth to the office of Christ as an high priest over the house of God; alluding to the high priest under the law, whose office it was to burn incense every evening and morning upon the golden altar, which stood within the vail of the holy place, and to enter in once a year into the holy of holies, with the blood of atonement: all which was a typical representation of Christ's merit and mediation, who is the high priest of our profession; he entered within the vail, even into heaven itself, at the Father's right hand, making continually intercession for his people, who by virtue of his mediation, &c. answereth for, and causeth the prayers of all saints to be heard and owned before the throne of God in heaven; for by the smoke of the incense ascending up out of the angel's hand, we are to understand, that it is through

Ch.viii.ANGELS PREPARE TO SOUND.111

through the merits and intercession of Christ, who always appears in the presence of God for us, with his own blood, that all the saints prayers are heard and owned of God, and not on account of any worth or excellency in themselves; and that every believer's prayer that are thus put up in the name of Christ, whether they be weak or strong, if done in faith, they are well pleasing to God, and cannot miss of having their hearts desire in due season accomplished.

Verses 5, 6. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast into the earth; and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.

Jesus Christ, who is the angel of the covenant, unto whom is given all power in heaven and on earth, who according to his office as the high priest over the house of God, orders all things for the good of his people; he took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth; that is, he managed the affairs of state in such a manner, as to admit some dreadful judgment to fall upon the men of the earth, who would not be reformed, but choosed to follow the errors of Balaam, the false prophet, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, and in preferring false religion to true: for the mystery of iniquity which was also working in the apostle's time, is about that time (I mean, when the seven angels

angels prepared themselves to sound with their trumpets) gaining ground, and like to set up its head; and the woman who brought forth the man child that was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, mentioned in chap. xii. fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and threescore days. Then the seven angels which had seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound; that is, they were ready to put in execution (or sound an alarm) what God in his providence laid before them to fulfil his will, in order to magnify his holy word, to the end that nothing that is there written should fall to the ground; and therefore, as it is here said, the seven angels that had seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.

Verse 7. And the first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees were burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

The signs and circumstances of these times, together with the scenes of events that followed, brings us to form an idea of what is meant by the hail and the fire mingled with blood, and these are, destructive wars, fearful judgments, and dreadful calamities; by the trees being burnt-up, is, cutting off families of destruction within the empire of Rome; and the green grass being burnt-

Chap. viii. **THIRD ANGEL SOUND.** 113

up, signifies people's estates and other effects consumed by the devourer.

Verfes 8, 9. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood: and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

The connection that each trumpet have with another, particularly with respect to the events and circumstances of the four first trumpets, naturally leads us to consider that the effects of this trumpet, and that which follows by the sounding of the fourth trumpet, is all of one and the same nature with the first and second, as we may perceive in their emblems; as is said of the great mountain burning with fire, is the powers of the Roman empire worsted after it became Christian, by a superior number of forces; a great mountain is a powerful army arising from foreign countries, burning and consuming as it were a third part of people's lives, estates, and other effects.

Verse 10. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters.

This great star which fell from heaven, is Constantine the Great's misfortune, his defeat in
the

114 FOURTH ANGEL SOUND. Ch. viii.

the wars he was engaged to carry on, who some years before burning as a lamp, by his great conquest, now falling down upon the rivers and fountains of water, which signify the destruction of his whole family.

Verse 11. And the name of the star is called wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

A proper emblem of that bitter cup of affliction it was to many in those days, because of the overthrow of that illustrious family.

Verse 12. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

These universal eclipses, and the darkness of the day and night in part holds out, emblematically the gradual disannulling of the established laws, statutes, and ordinances, tending to the total overthrow of the Roman empire, till at length Rome itself was subdued and deprived of all authority.

Verse 13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying, with a loud voice, Wo, wo, wo to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the

Ch.viii. THREE WOES PROCLAIMED. 115

trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound.

How awful must these woes be in their progressive course, and how terrible must they appear in the end, when the seven vials of God's wrath shall be poured out; one might imagine by hearing what is already said, that a greater plague scarcely can befall the inhabitants of the earth than those severe calamities effected by the sounding of the trumpets as afore-mentioned; but if we consider things in part, sorrow or pain in part, grief in part, as has been often mentioned by the sounding of the trumpets, it cannot be so dreadful as when all parts are put together to complete the misery; and we must own and confess, that plagues of the body, whatever kind or degree it be of, cannot be so great or so intolerable as plagues of both soul and body put together; for, although God was pleased to extinguish the family of Constantine so soon after his eminent service done to his church, yet it cannot be supposed but that great personage at the same time was a favourite of heaven, and therefore his name was written in the book of life; though God might charge him with the sin of the church of Ephesus, who departed from its first love, and therefore remove the candlestick out of its place, and that for nourishing and cherishing the man of sin who was on the growing order after the empire became Christian, and the more that grew in strength the more the church of the living God grew in weakness, as to outward accommodation

dation in the world; yet the sin of nourishing and cherishing the man of sin could not be so great in the days of Constantine, as afterwards when that falshood appeared more eminent and more exposed to open view; and this, as I percieve, is the cause of the Lord's controversy with the people of the land for following a religion which he ever hated, and which he utterly abhors; yet for all so many visible marks of his displeasure, in order to drive men from that complicated scheme of villainy brought forth out of the bottomless pit of hell, the inhabitants of the world went on still, until their wound became incurable. God doth not afflict willingly, nor hath any pleasure in plaguing of the people, or in destroying men's lives without giving a very good reason for it; and before he punisheth any nation or people he first warns men of what he intends to do before he puts his righteousness forth as the light, and his judgment as the noon day; for, although God is infinitely good and merciful, and abundantly extends and communicates his goodness and mercy to all his creatures in various manners, yet in a different degree, according to his own unerring wisdom and unsearchable understanding, for he is most just, most holy, most true, and excellent in all his works, and in righteousness doth he judge, and will by no means let sin go unmolested, nor suffer sinners to escape his righteous judgments.

REVELATION, Chap. ix.

Verse 1. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth, and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

I find that the most learned divines of the Protestant persuasion, though they differ in their exposition on this chapter, yet generally agree in this, (to wit,) that the anti-christian church, under the sound of the fifth trumpet, is arrived to its highest pitch of strength, splendor, and magnitude. This is what I am now (through God's help) going to make clear; first, By opening the words of the text; secondly, In viewing the connection there is between trumpet and trumpet.

And first, the star falling from heaven on the earth must mean some eminent professor in divinity, falling from the truths of the gospel unto dangerous errors. I have all along, through the series of this comment, shewed, that stars in this book do signify eminent professors of religion; and falling from heaven upon the earth, must mean a falling away, or departing from the truths of the gospel light into grievous errors; the key to open the bottomless pit, is the power which was given him to delude or deceive the people, as shall of course be made plain. Now to whom can this be applied? surely none so fit to represent this star falling from heaven upon earth, than the corrupt church of Rome, though formerly at the

I

opening

opening of the sixth seal it might seem to be of the true church, which in scripture is called heaven, because God's gracious and glorious presence (which make heaven) is there most eminently displayed; for the connection there is between the opening of the sixth seal and the voices of the first trumpet, make this application just, for this star fell from heaven after four of the seven trumpets had sounded, and the next trumpet, which is the sixth, bring in the reformation from popery.

Verse 2. And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened, by reason of the smoke of the pit.

This smoke of error and delusion had darkened both sun and air to such a degree, that the holy scriptures, with the true interpretation thereof, was turned into fables, changing the truths there unto lies; the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the sun of righteousness, was almost wholly extinguished, and men most wretchedly lost in that abominable smoke of Satan's delusion.

Verse 3. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth; and unto them were given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

This is to make us understand the nature of that abominable smoke, namely, the errors
and

and corruption of the church of Rome, which by degrees were growing, till when it appeared in its full strength, as it is said, brought forth locusts upon the earth, and had power like scorpions. This is a plague different from the former, the plagues of the four angels (as has been already shewn) reached to the destruction of men's lives and worldly effects, which sometimes is common with the best of men, but this is in reality the plague of men's souls, the fatal consequences of that corruption of the heart, a most wretched, dangerous, and consuming disease of the souls of men that naturally bring forth spiritual vermin, to the hurt of the rational powers of men; for all false religion, all superstition and idolatrous practices are irrational, which issues in the destruction of the reasonable soul, which in a word is the effect of that enmity there is between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent.

Verse 4. And it was commanded them, that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

This is to let us see more clearly the nature of this plague, that it doth not reach to the destruction of men's estates and worldly effects, which is compared to trees and green grass, (effected by the first angel sounding with his trumpet) but of a more dreadful and woeful nature, a spiritual

disease that should hurt none of the truly godly who live by faith in Christ Jesus, but only the prophane and ungodly; these are they who have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

Verse 5. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

This torment must needs be of the nature of a slavish fear, occasioned by a guilty conscience, through the apprehension of approaching judgment. There may be something that will appear disagreeable in false religion, when it is laid open to the rational powers of men, even such men as have not the seal of God in their foreheads, which may continue for a time, perhaps for the space of five months, or more; and this is true in respect to all false religion, as it is contrary to the truths of the gospel, which is altogether founded upon the most equitable and reasonable terms. It sometimes happen that wicked and ungodly men are by the light of conscience convinced of the plague of their own hearts, which for a time causes much disquietude and uneasiness for the wrongs they have done to their own souls, and of forgetting God, yet they never truly repent, but obstinately resolve to continue in unbelief, as bound slaves to their vicious courses, under the power and dominion of Satan.

Verse

Verse 6. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

This is a confirmation as to the truth of what is already said, seeing that in these words do tell the language of reprobates; for as the religion of Jesus Christ brings peace, joy, comfort, and rest to a weary soul that hungers after righteousness, so every symptom of a false religion have a natural tendency of meeting with disappointments, uneasiness, and troubles of mind.

Verse 7. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

This is a further description of the natural tendency of a religion founded upon falshood, as it is compared to horses rushing into a battle; for it is expressly said, that the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; therefore they were not locusts, nor horses, but like, or resembling (in some sort) both these, according to their nature and different kinds. As the shapes of the locusts is disagreeable to the human sight, and hurtful to the fruits of the earth, so the strength, swiftness, and forwardness of a horse running into a battle, is terrible in its appearance, and unmerciful in its conquest. They had also crowns on their heads like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men; these are emblems of the victory obtained over poor

I 3
souls

souls to the strengthening of Satan's kingdom, representing some shew of humanity, wisdom, and religious order, all seemingly very prosperous.

Verse 8. And they had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth as the teeth of lions.

These things signify spacious appearance of sanctity, voluntary humility, will-worship, and other rites and ceremonies, according to the nature of that religious service of the church of Rome.

Verse 9. And they had breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

These are lively representations of that triumphant and victorious state of the anti-christian church, when it was just coming to its height and outward splendor in the world.

Verse 10. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

Tails are emblems of deceitfulness, hypocrisy, and subtilty, in which course they were to continue in a remarkable manner for the space of five months: five months, when understood as a day for a year, according to the prophetic stile, as is so understood by the most part of learned commentators, makes one hundred and fifty years, which

which space of time is to be reckoned when anti-christ came to his height, and continued in his full strength, like one hour of his whole time at his noon day; this is that hour mentioned in *Rev.* xvii. 12. in which the ten horns, or kings, continued all of one mind, in the giving their power and strength to the beast, until the word of God were to be fulfilled. And this hundred and fifty belong to the number of the beast mentioned in *Rev.* xiii. 18. where it is said, here is wisdom; let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred three score and six. The number of a man, is the age of a man divided into three different stages of life, childhood, manhood, and old age; and the number of the beast is 666, which number doubled, for the morning and evening and noon-day hour, and added together make 1482 for his whole time; for we are told by the apostle Paul, *2 Theff.* ii. that the mystery of iniquity were already working in his time, but could not lift up his head until the Roman empire became Christian, which took place at the opening of the sixth seal, which was about the year of our Lord 300; this number, added to the said 1482, make 1782; but to make this calculation answerable to other events, let it be considered, that in stating the beginning of anti-christ's rise, when the empire first became Christian, which was about the year of our Lord 300, his morning began, and continued rising to its height for the

space of 666 years : now if we add the year of our Lord 300 to the number of the beast, it brings us to the year 966, when anti-christ arose to its height, and continued so for the space of five prophetic months, or 150 years ; then again, if we add 150, the hour in which the ten horns continued all of one mind in giving their power and strength unto the beast, it brings us to the year 1116 : again, if we add 666, the number for the evening of the day, to the said number of years 1116, it brings us to the year of our Lord 1782, as before, and we are now by the mercy of God advanced to this present year of our Lord God 1779. Then, according to this calculation, in less than three years, Mystery Babylon's final desolation cometh, and the mystery of God shall be finished.

Verse 11. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek, hath his name Apollyon.

Here closes the whole scene belonging to the first woe, made manifest by the fifth angel sounding with his trumpet, and is spoken in reference to what is said in the beginning of the chapter concerning the star that fell from heaven upon the earth, to whom was given the key of the bottomless pit ; for the king who is called the angel of the pit, is the same with the star which fell from heaven unto the earth : unto whom were given, &c. cannot be applied to Mahomet, as some unwarrantably have

have asserted, for the star falling from heaven unto the earth shew him to be a Christian by profession, or a professor of divinity, or an eminent professor in the doctrine of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; but if it can be ascertained that Mahomet ever was an eminent servant of Jesus Christ, I mean a minister of the gospel, then I will acknowledge that Mahomet is the star here spoken of, that fell from heaven unto the earth, unto whom was given the key of the bottomless pit: but suppose it could be made good, that Mahomet first was a Christian by profession, and afterwards to fall from it, I am sure it cannot overthrow the strength of argument, or lessen any one of the evidences given in confirmation of the truth, as I have already explained the words and the application as equitable and just. For the king which is said to be over the locusts, and who is called the angel of the bottomless pit, is the same unto whom were given the key of the bottomless pit; the difference only is, that before the fifth angel sounded, the pit was not wholly opened, the man of sin was not revealed or publicly made known, as it appeared afterwards, and therefore it is said that the anti-christian army had a king over them, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon, the same as a destroyer, or murderer of souls; very applicable to the pope of Rome, after he was advanced to great authority, touching both his civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Verse

126 FIFTH ANGEL SOUND. Chap. ix.

Verse 12. One woe is past, and behold there cometh two woes more hereafter.

Here we are told that one of the three great woes were past when the fifth angel blew with his trumpet, but that there were two great woes to follow in course, and that with the sixth and seventh angels blowing with their trumpets; by which we learn two things, first, that all the trumpets were to take place one after another with respect to the order of time; secondly, that the second woe extend so far and no farther than the sixth angel sounding with his trumpet, and that the third and last woe should be cotemporary with the seventh trumpet, when the mystery of God shall be finished in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, chap. x. 11. which cannot in any case agree with many of our large expositions of the Bible, where it is stated that the seventh trumpet have sounded so far back as the reformation from popery. The visible church is not the object of these woes, as some represent it to be; nay, it is plain that the inhabitants of the earth, on whom the woes are pronounced, are such as worldly-minded men, who place their happiness in the creature more than the Creator, whether churchmen or others. And it is evident by what is said, that the first woe is the plague of the soul, distinct from that of the body, not only with respect to sin itself in the soul of man, but more especially as it is a disease occasioned by the delusion of Satan, which did not hurt true believers, but only

only those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads. The second woe is that of killing the body; when both are put together is the second death, mentioned chap. xxi. &c. The third and last woe is the bringing down all the powers of darkness that stands in opposition to the kingdom of Christ in the world, which is to take place when the second woe is past, at the voice of the seventh angel, when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, chap. xi. and xv.

Verse 13. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar, which is before God.

This voice which came from the four horns of the golden altar, is the voice of Christ the Mediator, answering for his three-fold offices, prophet, priest, and king; the four horns of the golden altar, which is a representation of the fulness that is in Christ, imply no less; for as much as the golden altar of incense placed within the vail of the holy place, even the temple of Jerusalem, was a manifest type of the God-man Mediator, so the horns of the golden altar is a manifest type of Christ's kingly power, by which he is able to rule all the affairs of states for the welfare of his mystical body, the church, to the downfall of its adversaries.

Verse 14. Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, loose the four angels that are bound in the great river Euphrates.

The

The voice which came from the four horns of the golden altar, is directed to the sixth angel, one of the seven spirits of God, or the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne; which is a display of the power and manifold wisdom of Christ as Mediator, by which he manageth the affairs of state through the world, in such a manner as to make every event in the course of God's providence subservient to his purposes for the accomplishment of his promises to the church. Loose the four angels that are bound, &c. that is, let instruments of providence be set at liberty, through the sounding of an alarm of war, in order to execute judgment upon idolatrous worshippers who repent not of their deeds.

Now, if we take a view of the signs of the fifth angel, as it is connected with the signs of the times, the common circumstances of affairs will lead us to the times when the providence of God opened a door for the powers of the Turks to cut off and destroy the Greek church, and to take possession of the city of Constantinople: the reason that may be given why the Turkish empire is called in the plural number four, as four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, (as has been already observed, chap. vii.) is because an imperial authority in scripture is compared to the whole world; and the four winds, as east, west, north, and south, representing as it were the face of the whole universe, as far as any power or authority of any government extendeth; with this view we are to take
the

the number four always in this book to signify some certain fulness.

Verse 15. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

To slay the third part of men, is here to be understood the overthrowing that government of the Greek empire, as might be computed to be the third part of the Christian world, or such as owned the Christian name, although it was not for professing that name that the third part of men here were slain, but for being guilty of idolatry, as shall be shewn in course: the preparation of the Turks, in this enterprize, is said to be for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year; an hour is the twenty-fourth part of a day, in the prophetic stile is fifteen days;—a day is a year;—a month is thirty years;—and a year, according to the same account, is 360 years, which makes 396 years and some days, the time that the Turks have taken for preparing themselves in the destruction of the eastern Roman empire, and to set up the Mahometan religion there instead of the Roman catholick: the date of the Ottoman's reign began in the year of Christ 1301, though the city of Constantinople was not taken until some years after; now if we subtract 396, the time of the Turks preparation for slaying the third part of men from 1301, what remains is 905, when the Ottoman empire was

was established on the ruins of the eastern Roman empire, from 905 to 1301; this again leads us to state the beginning of the Turks preparation much about the time when anti-christ arrived to his highest pinnacle of honour, which agrees very well to the time in which the locusts tormented those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads; now if we double this number of years 396, for the morning and evening of the Turks whole day, or his whole age or time from the beginning to the end of his killing and destroying the Christians (according to that calculation as has been said of the number of the beast) it brings us to the year of our Lord 1696, or 1697, much about the time of the revolution effected by king William, which put an end to the second woe, when the Spirit of life from God entered into the dead bodies of the witnesses that were slain in the streets of the great city, chap. xi. Now, to confirm the truth of the whole, let us remember, that in that same year 1697, prince Eugene obtained a remarkable victory over the Turks, the effect of which was the peace at Carlowitz in the year following. From the whole, we may conclude, that the sixth vial is already poured out on the great river Euphrates, which began after the revolution was effected by king William, that so the kings of the east, the protestant princes in Germany might be prepared for the glorious coming of Christ's kingdom, when the Jews shall again be gathered together, to take possession of their own land.

Verse

Verse 16. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousands, and I heard the number of them.

This vast great and powerful army of horse and horsemen, intimates that the followers of the Mahometan religion were very many, almost infinite; and they are through a glass represented in dress, in shape, and in fierceness much like the Roman catholic religion, and this to shew the difference there is between the religion of Jesus Christ, and that of all others that have no connection therewith; for every false religion in scripture is represented in a figure like filthy beasts, in various shapes, as was said of the locusts, &c. But the religion of Christ, in scripture, is set forth always in the similitude of a beautiful well-proportioned woman; and why? because a woman is, and was ordained of God to be the man's intimate companion, in which, among all other creatures, his love and good will should abound.

Now, as I said, that the followers of the Mahometan religion were almost infinite, as appears in the event; for what people or potentates in the world (as we are credibly informed) can put so many men to the field of battle as the Mahometans? yet as powerful and fierce as the Turks might always have been against the Christian name, they could do nothing until they had a commission from him who stand at the horns of the golden altar, to put in execution what he
before

before determined to be done, whose providence restrained the eager desire of the Turks from doing of it before.

Verse 17. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.

These breast-plates of fire, &c. relate not only to the prosperous proceedings of the Turks in their consuming all things before them, in order to their obtaining a complete victory over the eastern Roman empire, but also implies some zealous pretences for the setting up the Mahometan religion, in lieu of idolatrous worship of the church of Rome; for though the delusion of Mahomet, and that of anti-christ, are both alike pernicious to poor souls; yet not Mahomet, but the pope of Rome is anti-christ, because he pretends to be the vicar of Christ, as it were in Christ's stead, leading men in the paths of truth to heaven; he at the same time deceitfully leads multitudes headlong to the prison of hell; he sits in the house of God, maintaining damnable falsehoods, speaking lies in hypocrisy: and therefore the Roman catholick religion is more base and abominable in the sight of God, and more dangerous to Christians than the delusions of Mahomet.

Chap. ix. SIXTH ANGEL SOUND. 133

Verse 18. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

By the fire, here we are to understand destructive wars;—by the smoke, Mahometan errors and delusion;—by the brimstone, the merciless and cruel proceedings of the Turks in their consuming and devouring all things before them as far as their power extended, to the overthrow of every valuable commodity, with men's lives, laws, religion, and liberties, as were established in the Greek empire.

Verse 19. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

These words set forth (in a figure) the nature of the Mahometan principles; the unclean spirit that proceeds out of the mouth of the false prophet, chap. xvi. 13. with his lying miracles, like unto a cunning subtil serpent, of which these serpents like tails are a proper emblem; therefore Mahomet the false prophet, and the Grand Signior, called the dragon, chap. xvi. 13. are the heads of the Turks, with whom they do hurt.

Verse 20. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold and silver,

K

and

and brass and stone, and of wood : which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.

Now we come to know the reason why the Greek church was so severely plagued, was, because of their idolatry. It is said they worshipped devils and idols of gold and silver, &c. instead of believing, trusting, and relying on God, the living God, who alone is able to save, and to be worshipped according to the direction of his holy word; they went on according to the imagination of their own evil and deceitful hearts; they worship devils, that is, they put confidence in base and deceitful men, who follow the devices of the devil or devils; they trusted in men who were rank enemies to the truths of the gospel, and for giving liberty to continue without fear, in a course of sinful indulgences, and to do every base thing which best agreed to corrupt nature, such as making a God of their wealth, and of their own good works, as if they could merit heaven by parting with their worldly goods and become poor voluntarily; though such self-denial is merely for to please themselves, without any regard to the truths of Christ, nor to Christ himself, as the way, the truth, and the life. Secondly, They worshipped idols, &c. in holding men's persons in admiration, having dead images of whom they call saints to bow to and reverence, and to amuse their minds to excite devotion, when alas, at the same time they consider not that the more their hearts are engaged to these abominations, the farther they are off from God, and the more

more ripe for destruction. Thirdly, They worship these idols of gold, and silver, and brass, &c. the work of their own hands, particularly in the crucifix, which they honour and admire, not so much for the regard they have for Christ crucified as a Lamb without blemish, of whom we receive the atonement, or any regard they have to him as their God, King, and Saviour, who cannot now die, nor be crucified, but because it is a God of their own making, though it cannot see, nor hear, nor walk; but what is still more absurd in those idolaters, is making a God of a little cake of bread, like unto a thin wafer, in the eucharist, believing that the same should be changed into the real body of the Son of God.

Verse 21. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Notwithstanding that singular instance of God's wrath, and of his hatred to all idolatrous practices found among Christians, in suffering the Turks (the common enemies of the Christian name) to slay the third part of men, or to cut off and destroy the Greek church, computed to be the third part of the Christian world; the two third parts that have escaped these plagues repented not, and for all the visible marks of God's displeasure in overturning the practices of worshipping God by images, since that time, even in many populous places of the western empire, effected by the reformation, yet the greater part

have repented not, and therefore the hand of the Lord is stretched out still, in order to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

REVELATION, Chap. x. 1.

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, cloathed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

The whole of this chapter is a prophecy of the reformation from popery, which followed the downfall of the Grecian empire by the Turks, after they had taken possession of the city of Constantinople; for the second woe which began with the destruction of the Greek church, extend to the voice of the seventh angel, that begins with the finishing of the mystery of God; and therefore the sixth angel founding with his trumpet, includes the reformation until the finishing of the mystery, which was to come to pass in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to found.

This mighty angel which came down from heaven, that was cloathed with a cloud, &c. is Christ, mystically considered the work of the reformation from popery, which began about the year of our Lord 1517; it was another angel to shew that it was opposite to, and quite different from the star spoken of in the former chapter, that

that star which fell from heaven on the earth : this mighty angel came down from heaven cloathed with a cloud, &c. and this to shew forth the work to be of God, in opposition to the smoke that arose out of the bottomless pit, which is the work of the devil ; for to be cloathed with a cloud, is to have authority from God himself to publish and declare divine truths, witnessed by the word and Spirit of God, which was a manifest token of his peculiar favour, as the cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, was to the Israelites of old, directing them on their journey through the wilderness, *Exod. xiii. 21, 22.* The rainbow that was upon his head declare God's faithfulness, in the accomplishment of his promises to the church, after so long a time of darkness, by reason of the smoke that arose out of the bottomless pit, as the rainbow put in the clouds was a sign of God's covenant with Noah, that he would not destroy the earth again by water : and now God making a change in the affairs of state, in the bringing a flood of wrath upon the anti-christian world.

His face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire, to denote the beams of the sun of righteousness, in the bright displays of gospel truths, in the preaching of the word in the face of Jesus Christ, published and spread abroad far and near, even to many nations and people, and that by Christ's faithful pastors and teachers who are the feet of his mystical body ; as John the Baptist was a burning and a shining light,

and as a pillar of fire, even as the church of the living God is called the ground and pillar of the truth, in opposition to all the powers of darknes.

Verse 2. And he had in his hand a little book open : and he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth.

This little book open in the hand of the angel, is a manifestation of the work of reformation, or a plain discovery of the work as already began and carrying on, until the restoration of the Jews, when the vail shall be taken off their hearts in the finishing of the mystery of God, and that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound.

His right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth, sheweth that the work of reformation was carried on by means of the civil powers, as well as by that of ecclesiastic, which the event has made it to appear.

Verse 3. And cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth : and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

It is well known, that the cries and voices of the reformation from popery, has been heard of far and wide, almost through the whole world, like the roaring of a lion seeking after his prey; and when this cry had begun, seven thunders uttered their voices : thunder is not only very awful in itself, but it prognosticates some sad judgment

judgment immediately to follow; and if the seven vials of God's wrath began to be poured out on the anti-christian world, at the beginning of the reformation, as all protestant writers generally agree that they have, then there can be no room to dispute that the seven thunders which uttered their voices, do signify the seven vials, containing the seven last plagues, as we have it on record, chap. xv. 12. And I saw another sign in heaven great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

Verse 4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

What is said here by sealing up those things which the seven thunders uttered, is not as if the things that were uttered by the seven thunders were not revealed to the church in general, as well as to St. John in particular; for although the seven vials which was to be poured out on the kingdom of anti-christ began with the reformation from popery, yet it was not proper to write of these voices, in this place; because this tenth chapter only gives a general hint on the state of the church, and the trial of which it was exposed to in the way, during the time of the reformation until the finishing of the mystery; therefore the apostle, although he might have

good reason for going about to write what was revealed to him concerning the kingdom of anti-christ, by the pouring out of the seven vials upon it, which began with the reformation, yet he was immediately forbid by a voice from heaven to write of these things, it being the subject matter of another chapter, as we have it on record through the whole of the 16th chapter of this book.

It is amazing to hear the sentiments of some of our commentators on these words, who say, when a voice from heaven commanded the apostle not to reveal what was spoken in these words, it would be ridiculous to go about to explain it; it is sufficient (say they) to observe it was not proper to remain on record a public revelation to the church in general, however proper it was to be revealed to the apostle in particular. But doth not the apostle Peter expressly tell us, 2 *Pet.* i. that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation? and if all scripture be profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, as the apostle Paul says it is, 2 *Tim.* iii. 16. then surely these things which were uttered by the seven thunders, was revealed to the church in general; for since all scriptures are profitable, why not this? but what profit can we gather from things we do not understand? and how can we understand them without we search into the truth, in order to know the meaning? and how can we know this if it is dangerous in any shape to search for

for the meaning? which must be the case, if the knowledge of the same is not attainable by our searching. But if it be ridiculous to go about to explain the scriptures which was written for our learning, and which we are by our Saviour himself called upon to search, *Jobn* v. 39. because they testify of him; then it must not only be ridiculous, but also a great cheat in men to impose upon the public such a manifest falshood, especially in that of making them pay so largely for their annotations on several chapters of sacred scripture, which they themselves never thoroughly digested.

Verses 5, 6. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven. And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.

I have shewn at the beginning of this chapter that the mighty angel which came down from heaven, and which was cloathed with a cloud, &c. doth represent the reformation from popery, which began about the year of our Lord, 1517, and that the same angel setting his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth, do shew the effect that the reformation have had on the state affairs of the times, both civil and ecclesiastical: and here again the same angel standing

ing in the same position, with his hand lifted up to heaven, &c. all which is a manifest discovery of the solemn declaration of protestant churches joining together as one, like a mighty angel sent from heaven, or from God, to declare his will and to execute righteous judgment on the earth, affected by the fervent zeal of protestant divines, and people of every denomination; and this in many countries and kingdoms in Europe, particularly in Germany, England, Scotland, and Ireland, professing and confessing the truth of the gospel, and preaching publickly the same in opposition to the errors and corruptions of the church of Rome; taking God, the living God, the creator of all things, who is the searcher of all hearts, to witness for the truth and sincerity of their declaration, that time should no longer be delayed, for idolatrous worshippers to continue in their sins, but that the seven vials of God's wrath should in course be poured out upon those men which were not killed by the last plagues of the four angels, who had slain the third part of men who repented not of the work of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk; nor repented of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their theft; and therefore the hand of the Lord is stretched out still to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth, and this by means of pouring out of the seven vials, which

are

are the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

Now if we compare what is said of the angel standing on the sea and on the earth, who had his hand lifted up to heaven, declaring that time should not be longer, with what is said of the first and second vials, we shall find that both meet together in holding out the same thing; a proof sufficient to hold it for truth that the seven thunders which uttered their voices are the same as is said of the seven vials, who began with the reformation, and so continue until the finishing of the mystery of God. For we find that the first vial was poured out upon the earth, that was on the anti-christian earth, the same earth on which the angel set his left foot, by which there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image, chap. xvi. 2. and this verily was fulfilled when Luther and Calvin first began to publish their declaration in holding a testimony to the truth of the gospel, and by the preaching of the word, which lay a long while under cover, but now is made manifest by the little book which was open in the hand of the angel which stand on the earth and on the sea. Again, by the angel setting his right foot upon the sea, means his power and authority, or the Pope's power and jurisdiction trodden under foot by the reformation, in which there was no longer living for men in that sea, according to the second vial, chap. xvi. 3. And the second angel poured out his

his vial upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul died in the sea. This also was fulfilled when the powers of the Pope, both civil and ecclesiastic, that anti-christian yoke, was overturned in several dominions in Europe by Protestant princes, particularly by king Henry the Eighth of England, although he himself at the same time was a Roman catholic in his heart, which was no small confirmation to the truth to evince that the work was of God.

Verse 7. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Now, if by the voice of the seventh angel the mystery of God is to be finished when he shall begin to sound with his trumpet, then the voice of the sixth trumpet most certainly include the reformation from popery; and if so, then must of course six of the vials be poured out from the beginning of the reformation until the finishing of the mystery, and then the seventh trumpet is cotemporary with the seventh vial, which terminates in the finishing of the mystery.

Some objections to this plan answered.

OBJ. Our critics generally are of one mind, that the days of the voice of the seven angels began with the reformation from popery.

ANS.

Ans. If that can be affirmed for truth, then what is here said of sacred scripture cannot be true, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets, which plainly holds out that the mystery of God shall be finished when the seventh angel begin to sound, contrary to their saying, because we are now advanced to above 250 years since the beginning of the reformation, and yet it doth not appear by the event that the mystery of God is finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Obj. Some of our commentators affirm, that the word here, when he shall begin to sound, is an error in our translation; and that the mystery of God is opened in the preaching and publishing of the gospel, which was long hid, as it were, under a cloud by the mystery of iniquity, and began with the reformation.

Ans. Sometimes it has been the case with men when they found that they could not by their human learning comprehend the scriptures, that they might carry on their scheme, though perhaps contrary to scripture evidences, charge our translations with errors: but even suppose it had been true that the original word here could bear a different meaning, and that the translators of our Bible might be mistaken in their notion of expressing some words, yet it cannot be supposed that they have erred throughout the whole of this chapter,

chapter, all which agree in this, that the sixth trumpet includes the reformation until the finishing of the mystery of God. I deny not but this mystery of God is partly opened in the preaching, publishing, and spreading of the gospel, which was long hid through the mystery of iniquity, but how can it be said that this mystery was finished, when by their own saying it was but beginning to be opened, which they hold by what is said of the temple being opened in heaven? chap. xi. 15.

I shall now enquire for the days of the voice of the seventh angel, as it is represented in scripture, which begin with the finishing of the mystery of God, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. And here I shall endeavour to shew that the days of the voice of the seventh angel in scripture is enjoined to the latest period, when all things shall be fulfilled which were spoken of by the prophets.

And in the first place, let it be considered that the seventh trumpet is the last, and always in scripture is applied to the last judgment, whether taken strictly in respect to the change it brings upon the material world, or figurately, with respect to the change it brings on the stated affairs of the church, as it is a world of spiritual privileges. Now the voice of the seventh angel is the last, when taken strictly touching the change it brings on the material world at the last day, according to these words of the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall

shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, (for the trumpet shall sound) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. Again, the voice of the seventh angel is the last when taken figuratively, in regard to the change it brings on the stated affairs of the church, as it is a world of spiritual privileges. If we consider the several voices of the trumpets distinctly in their own language, and observe what effect they have upon states and kingdoms in the world, we shall find that the last of the seven have a mark of eminence above the rest, to the finishing or compleating of something very extraordinary relating to an universal change in the world, and that to the glory of the Mediator's kingdom; as is said, chap. xi. 15. And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Therefore the voice of the seventh angel is cotemporary with the pouring out of the seventh vial, which begins with the finishing of the mystery of God.

It remains now to be considered what we are to understand by finishing the mystery of God, that are to come to pass in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, as God hath declared it to his servants the prophets.

What is meant by this mystery, or finishing of the mystery, the apostle Paul tells us in his discourse

course concerning the restoration of the Jews, ingrafting them again into their own olive tree, who were cut off for their unbelief, *Rom. xi. 15.* For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but the life from the dead? Verse 25, For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery (least ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Verse 26, And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Verse 27, For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. Here the apostle gives us a specimen of what the finishing of the mystery of God is, the end of which is the fulfilment of scripture prophecies, to the bringing in of the Jews to believe, to know, and to the acknowledgement of the truth as it is in Christ. This is said to be a mystery, because of the blindness in part which is happened to Israel, until the finishing of the mystery. There is a blindness in part happened to Israel, not only happened to the Jews, considered as such, but happened also even with the Israelite Christians, who profess their faith in Christ. There is a blindness in part happened even to the Christian church, until the finishing of this mystery, and therefore it concerns Christians as well as Jews earnestly to wish and pray for the finishing thereof, especially since the apostle was so earnest here in his exhortation

exhortation to his Christian brethren not to remain ignorant of this mystery, lest they should be wise in their own conceit.

Now this mystery of God is declared by the prophets, as it is written, God hath declared it to his servants the prophets; and as God hath declared the finishing of this mystery to the prophets of old, which remains yet to be fulfilled. Surely it is our duty, as Christians, to search for it among the prophecies, that we may know and understand what we are to learn by it, least by being ignorant therein, we shall be found (like fools) wise in our own conceits.

But it would be tedious for me here to repeat all the words of the prophets which are spoken in reference to the finishing of this mystery of God; I shall only mention a few prophetic expressions that seem to me most applicable, and then go on with my remarks on the rest of the chapter.

Isai. xxx. 25, 26. And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall: moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

What words can be spoke so much to the purpose as these, on this occasion, with respect to what hath been said to the unfolding of the mys-

tery which shall be finished when the seventh angel begin to sound with his trumpet; surely none can be so stupid as to imagine that this prophecy ever yet had its due accomplishment, but has been as yet held as a mystery, even in the church, until the bringing in of the Jews with the fulness of the Gentile world.

Again, if we read (with profit) what is declared by the same prophet, chap. ii. 2, 3, 4. comparing it with chap. lx. 16. to the end of the chapter, and chap. xi. 6, to the 12th verse, we shall there find prophecies of more glorious days to the church than ever yet has been: but in a more particular manner this mystery, or the finishing of the mystery of God was revealed, and declared by the prophet Daniel, as we have it in divers parts of his prophecy, particularly by what is said of the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, that smote Nebuchadnezzar's image upon his feet; and the same stone became a great mountain, which filled the whole earth, *Dan* ii. 34.

Moreover, God hath declared this mystery with the finishing of the mystery (and that with an oath of confirmation) to Abraham the father of the faithful, not only in the making him a great nation as is already fulfilled, but also, that in his seed all the nations in the earth should be blessed; which promise is fulfilled only but in part, according to the blindness in part which hath happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

Verses

Verfes 8, 9, 10. And the voice which I heard from heaven fpake unto me again, and faid, Go, and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the fea, and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and faid unto him, give me the little book. And he faid unto me take it, and eat it up; and it fhall make thy belly bitter, but it fhall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and eat it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as foon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

What hath been faid of the angel that stood upon the fea and upon the earth, with a little book open in his hand, is the fame work of reformation, carrying on to perfection the changes and alterations brought about by the reformation, from about the year of Chrift, 1517, as is declared by the angel, that time fhall be no longer, is as a door opened to let us into a new difcovery; for the book being open in the hand of the angel intimates a new difcovery of fome trying circumftances which the faithful worfhippers were to undergo; the church reduced from popularity into a fmall number of faithful worfhippers; for the voice which came from heaven (which John heard,) and faid to him again to go unto the angel to take the little book out of the angel's hand, and eat it up, is a call from God for the church to go through another trial, like

gold tried in the fire as it were a second time; for the same voice from heaven that prohibited John from writing what the seven thunders uttered, as in the 4th verse of this chapter, is here again calling unto him as in the person of the church, to take the book which was opened in the hand of the angel, and to eat it up: the meaning of which will be found to be this; that the truths of the gospel which was generally brought to light by the reformation, though exposed to imminent dangers by the enemies plot; yet as a little book open, as it were in the hand of Christ, holding it forth as it were to a body of divines to be thoroughly digested by them, which was sweet in the mouth but bitter in the belly; that is, pleasant in the contemplation, but unsavory in the holding a testimony thereunto, in the midst of an unbelieving and gain-saying people; as it appeared by the ill treatment of the witnesses, who, after they had finished their testimony, had been slain in the street of the great city, &c. chap. xi. 8. all which has been fulfilled according to the events of the times, complying with the voice of providence, and the call of God's word and Spirit to witness for the truths of Christ, as has been already made manifest by the book which was open in the hand of the angel, and afterwards eaten up or thoroughly digested by Christ's faithful witnesses. The whole agreeing so well with the times and common circumstances of affairs between the time from the beginning of the reformation, to the revolu-

revolu-

revolution effected by king William, is a sufficient argument to prove the truth of the whole contents as has been already explained and vindicated, particularly that the sixth trumpet includes the reformation until the call of the Jews, by the voice of the seventh angel when he shall begin to sound.

How weak therefore must the arguments of those men be, who hold, that this chapter has no place under the sixth trumpet, but only in as much as it is to be considered as a prophecy of what was to follow by the voice of the seventh angel. And therefore, in order to make their scheme appear somewhat feasible, they say, that this book was open in the hand of the angel, when the temple was shut up from among men, even whilst anti-christ was at his height, contrary to the scope of the words here recorded, which holds forth, that the mystery of iniquity were in part revealed; they might as well tell us, that this little book which contain the work of the reformation, was open in the hand of Christ the Mediator, ever since the opening of the first seal, which though true, would be saying nothing at all to the purpose in this place for the use of edifying.

Verse 11. And he said unto me, Thou must prophecy again before many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

These words are to be considered as they are connected to what is said in the next chapter, concerning the witnesses that were to prophesy,

until the time of finishing their testimony: here it is said, that John in the room of the faithful witnesses was to prophesy again, which implies that this prophesy had its beginning before that time, even before the reformation from popery, which prophesy is still to continue by Christ's faithful witnesses during the time of the reformation until the time of finishing their testimony; so that by this prophesy, which was to be again before many people, nations, tongues and kings, we are to understand the publick declarations of the faithful ministers of the gospel, against the corruption of the times since the reformation, until the time of pouring out of the fifth vial on the seat of the beast; and if so, then the sixth trumpet must include six of the vials before the seventh angel begin to sound,

REVELATION, Chap. xi.

Verse 1. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

In the preceding chapter I took notice, that the work of reformation from popery, as already made manifest, is what we are to understand by the book being open in the hand of the angel standing on the sea, and upon the earth; and that by John taking the book out of the angel's hand, and to eat it up, does signify the care and vigilance

vigilance of gospel ministers, examining into the affairs of the times, and that through their digesting of divine truths, according to the doctrine of the reformation, which was sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly : and here again the same angel is calling unto John (or to the faithful in his stead) to arise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein, which measuring implies something necessary to be determined, both with respect to the principles of religion, and the due proportion of the manner of worshipping the true God, as he hath already prescribed ; for it is not here said, Rise, and measure a temple different to what it was before, but the same temple and altar as was under the Mosaical dispensation ; yet in this view that the temple in the law was the type, this is the anti-type ; the former is the shadow, this is the body or the substance, alluding to the prophet Ezekiel's vision, chap. xl. in which he beheld a man with a measuring reed, taking the dimensions of a new temple, which was a prophesy given out to the Jews who were captives at Babylon, to encourage them in the time of their captivity, foretelling that their temple should be built again, and they themselves delivered from the Babylonish captivity, and serve their God in his holy temple as they did before, and be restored to their former privilege, and to worship God according to the appointed means ; here we see the connection between the types and the anti-types : yes, truly in every point, with

a beautiful harmony of concurring circumstances running through the whole ; for as the temple in the law was a typical representation of the gospel church, of whom Christ is head of that body, so the measuring of this temple is a constituting or re-establishing of gospel principles, according to the same plan in which it was before, when Christianity was first by law established, in the days of Constantine the first Christian emperor. Now as heathen paganism were abolished, and the religion of Christ was established by law under the opening of the sixth seal, so here under the sounding of the sixth trumpet, a new regulation is determined to be set on foot, in order to abolish the mystery of iniquity, even that abomination that caused the dissolution of God's heritage ; and as the first temple in the law was the type of the Christian church in its primitive state, (and the same afterwards established by law in the earth) was spoiled by Mystery Babylon, as the material temple of Jerusalem was by the Chaldeans, and as the vessels of the sanctuary was profaned, and the temple spoiled of its ornaments by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon ; so the vessels of the sanctuary under the New Testament church, was profaned by anti-christ, that man of sin, who sits in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God, *2 Thess. ii.*

Verse 2. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not ; for it is given unto the Gentiles : and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

Under

Under the Mosaical dispensation there were three distinct courts belonging to the temple; the first of these were the great outward court called the court of the Gentiles, which was next to the city of Jerusalem, and encompassed round about the temple, into which people of all sorts, on every solemn occasion, were admitted to walk: the second court, called the court of Israel, where none but Jews were admitted to go, except upon some special occasion: the third, or inner court, was that next to the holy place of the temple, where the altar of burnt offerings stood, and is called the sanctuary; for there the priests did offer up the sacrifice upon the altar according to the appointed means; all which was a manifest type, answerable to its anti-type in the New Testament temple, to wit, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. It is said in the gospel, that many are called, but few chosen; so the outward court contains all those that are outwardly called by the word upon men's profession who have an undoubted right to walk there as becomes Christians born unto this world by one Father, even God. But it is only the elect in Christ that are effectually called into the fellowship of the true Israelites of God, that they might be sanctified by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which the third or inner court did most amply typify; and this before any could enter into the holy place, which was a figure of the kingdom of heaven, according to that taught by our Saviour himself, Except a man be born again

again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Now seeing that the inner court of the temple was ordered to be measured, and the outward court left out and not measured, is to let us understand that the worshippers at the altar were but few compared with those in the outward court; and therefore the outward court here was left out and not measured, because it was for a time given to the Gentiles, even such as might profess the Christian religion, yet not (of God) accounted true believers, nor of the believer's seed, such as have a right to the privileges of those admitted into the inner court.

OBJ. If none were admitted into the inner court of the temple in the law, except the true worshippers; and if none but Jews had liberty to enter into the second court, which was called the court of Israel, how is it said, that anti-christ sits in the temple of God, whom the apostle Paul calls the man of sin? *2 Thess. ii.*

As it was in the type, so it is in the anti-type.

Antiochus Epiphanes not only tyrannized over the Jews, but also polluted God's sanctuary: he erected a prophane school in Jerusalem; he spoiled the temple; he burned all the books of Moses which he could get, and put to death all persons with whom they were found; he caused an altar to be built in the Holy Temple, and set up an abomination idol Tavis Olimpis, &c. in the holy place. And as all these things were performed by the enemies of God's people at the time of the second temple in the law, after the same manner
the

the religion of Christ was handled since the reformation by anti-christ; but this we must know, that anti-christ, whom the apostle calleth the man of sin, cannot sit in the New Testament temple without he be a Christian by profession, and maintain the doctrine of the Trinity; and he must be a Christian so far, as to believe and maintain three persons subsisting in one divine essence; since it is expressly said, that in the holy city, New Jerusalem, which cometh down from heaven, no temple is seen therein; but that the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, is the temple of it, chap. xxi. 22.

We see then the grounds and reason why the outward court was left out and not measured, is, because it was given to the Gentiles, who were to tread under foot the holy city forty and two months. Now this holy city, according to the language of the New Testament, is the truth of Christ maintained by a body of believers, joined together in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, like a well-built city, whose builder and maker is God, and whose foundation is the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, *Heb. xi. 10. Rev. xxi. 14.*

Verses 3, 4, 5, 6. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth

proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

By what is already said, it appears very plain that the two witnesses here are the few faithful worshippers of God, who in all ages when the church was most in danger they were most eminent in holding a testimony to the truth of revelation, for when they were weakest in themselves, they were then strongest in grace, and in the power of God; they are said to be two, not only on account of their fewness compared with the rest of the world, but because that under the Old Testament types, they were always spoken of in the same number two, as was Elias and Elisha, Moses and Aaron, Zerubbabel and Joshua; these in different ages of the church, to let us know that they are not to be taken here as two particular prophets that should come at the end of the world, who was to be killed by anti-christ, but a succession of faithful witnesses for the truths of Christ in opposition to the errors and corruptions of the times. The first two that this prophecy refers to, were Elijah and Elisha, who had an extraordinary measure of the Spirit of God, when the rest of the world was wicked and given to idolatry, they at the same time were remarkable for piety, and valiant on the side of truth and
righteous-

righteousness, and as they were filled with the sanctifying spirit, their hearts thereby were renewed : what they prayed for was for the glory of God, and therefore by their great faith they had whatsoever they prayed for. An instance for this we have by Elias's prayer, who prayed that it might not rain on the earth for the space of three years and six months; and he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit, *Jam. v. 17, 18*. Again, Moses and Aaron seems, by what is here said, to be the two faithful witnesses in their time, who had power given them to turn the waters in Egypt into blood, and to smite that place and the inhabitants thereof with all plagues. Also at the time, and after the captivity, Zerubbabel and Joshua, are called two olive trees, and the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. These seemingly were the faithful witnesses in their time, because unto them particularly were committed the charge of the sanctuary, and to lay the foundation of the temple; not because they were better men than some others at the captivity, for there is no doubt but that there were many more, but because the Lord had chosen them for his own names sake, according to the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying, not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts, *Zech. iv. 6*.

Now in the antitype, the two witnesses are also called the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth, like

two

two ever-green plants, beautiful to behold in the sight of the God of truth; particularly because of their faithfulness and the zeal they have to divine worship, as God himself prescribed in his word. All which doth signify a pure church, and to shew that God never left himself without a witness, though oftentimes were but few, yet always there has been some. The fire that proceedeth out of their mouth that was to devour their enemies, is the power that Christ has given to the church; for the fire of God's just judgment which they were to denounce against all such as will continue in a state of unbelief, should unavoidably consume all the disobedient and gain-sayers, since God is a consuming fire to all those that are, or shall be found out of Christ. But the righteous man shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters that bringeth forth fruit in its season, his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doth he shall prosper; the ungodly are not so, but are like unto the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous, for the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish, *Psal. i.*

Now these two witnesses are called two prophets, as in verse 10th, because in the type they were properly so, but in the anti-type they are two witnesses, and this to shew us in what respect they differ, though in principle the same. The prophets under the law has foretold of the events,
(vailed

(veiled over with types and figures) before it came to pass; but the New Testament prophets declare the things as already fulfilled in Christ; and if at any time they foretell of the event yet to come, they always at the same time remove the vail of ignorance in the preaching and expounding the word: they, as the apostle say, behold with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. The prophets of old always added to the canon of the scriptures, but those under the gospel, (ever since the days of the apostles) they neither add nor diminish, but open, expound, or interpret old prophecies, as they are fulfilled in Christ Jesus our Lord. Again, the two witnesses were to prophecy 1260 days clothed in sackcloth, that is, they were to continue in a mournful state, holding a testimony to the truth as it is in Christ, in opposition to the growing corruptions and defections of the times: as long as the outer court was given to the Gentiles and the holy city trodden under foot, so long were the two witnesses to prophecy and to undergo their hardships; for 1260 days is equal to 42 months: surely it is not for nothing, neither can it be thought a matter of no small moment to us that such a number of days and months should be so often mentioned in sacred scripture, and for to say it is not edifying to take this measure of time for a certain determined number of days or years, because so many have found themselves mistaken in their calculation,

tion, as some of our noted expositors tells us; but to take the whole indefinitely, is saying nothing at all to the purpose; the time being determined of God, is not a matter here to be doubted, as the generality of Christians readily will agree to that. But even though we believe that God knoweth all things, and that it is certain that he hath determined and set bounds to every event that come to pass, what are we to learn by 1260 days and 42 months, more than ten days and five months, and how are we edified by reading or hearing these words so often repeated over, if we still continue in the dark, and always remain ignorant of what is held forth to us in the words? And if it is not a duty incumbent on us to search into the meaning, because some have found themselves mistaken in their calculation, what are we the better by having such words in our bibles, although it is expressly said, that all was written for our learning? but these words are of no use to us if all is to be taken indefinitely. But as I am fully persuaded that it is the Christians duty to seek for the meaning of these words as well as any other part of the book, and that it is more for the use of edifying, to take this number of days and months definitely. I shall therefore endeavour (through God's help) to consider them all separately, one after another, observing the connection between the types and the anti-types, and then see what improvement may be made in the knowledge of divine truths by so doing.

First, the two witnesses, or the faithful ministers

of the gospel, prophesied 1260 days, clothed in sackcloth, and this to teach us, that as Antiochus Epiphanes exercised his tyranny over the Jews, and polluted God's sanctuary, the second temple in the law, so should it be by anti-christ in the work of reformation after it was established by law, which is the anti-type of the second temple; but if the witnesses had finished their testimony before the reformation trumpet have well began, as is asserted by such as state the seventh angel to begin with the reformation; then the reformation from Popery have no connection with its type the second temple; but as it is plainly demonstrated by many undeniable evidences, and confirmed by plain matters of fact, that both the first and second temple in the law have their anti-types under the gospel; then it must necessarily follow, that the witnesses were to continue their prophesying at the time, and since the reformation. As the angel said to John, who said to him, that he should prophesy again before many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings; now this period of prophesy must have its beginning before the reformation; for prophesying again undoubtedly holds, that the witnesses had prophesied before, that is, before the reformation: the beginning of which was, when anti-christ began to spoil the New Testament temple after it was established by law on the earth, answerable to the two prophets Ezekiel and Daniel, in the time of their captivity, after the first temple was spoiled by the powers of Babylon, so Christ's

M

faithful

faithful witnesses, begins their prophecy shortly after the destruction of the family of Constantine, by whose means the Christian religion was by law established—as it was in the type, so it is in the anti-type. The prophets prophesied at the time of their captivity, concerning their restoration, and the building again of their temple, yet they prophesied again; and although prophesying for some time ceased after the building of the second temple, yet they prophesied again until the coming of Christ to his second temple, whose coming made the glory of the second temple greater than the glory of the first, although it was in their eyes compared to the first temple as nothing. *Hag.* ii. 3.

From the whole we may observe, that the grand design of the apostle, yea rather the design of the Holy Ghost, in alluding so frequently in this book to the Old Testament prophecies, is to shew the connection between the types and the anti-types, not only that the man of sin might be the more easily discovered, but also to shew how all the prophecies are fulfilled in Christ. And as the connection between the types and anti-types, hitherto has been but little observed, though essentially necessary to let us into the knowledge how all the promises in Christ are verified to the church in the accomplishment of scripture prophecies, what wonder is it then that so many should be mistaken in the manner of their calculation! Again, this measure of time is twice mentioned in chap. xii. where it is said
of

of a woman bringing forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; the child caught up to God and to his throne; and the woman fleeing into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and threescore days; from which we may gather that the two witnesses that prophesied in sackcloth for 1260 days, and the woman fleeing into the wilderness during that time, both meet together in one, signifying the same thing, and holding forth the state of the Christian church, for so many years after the establishment of Christianity in the earth; the woman, therefore, is the true Church, and the man-child brought forth by her, that was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, is Christ-mystical, or Christ in his members, not Christ personally, for in this he is the husband, the head of the Church, and therefore not a child brought forth by her; neither is it to be understood of any particular member of Christ's mystical body, as Constantine might be, as some think to be the child here meant, who, as a Christian emperor, ruled the affairs of state in favour of the Christian church; but as he only was an instrument in Christ's hand for executing the authority given him in the bringing a change upon the empire, fulfilling the promises and the accomplishment of scripture prophecies, he was, therefore, a sign of the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, in order to execute righteous judgment in the earth. So by the man-

child here, which the woman brought forth to rule all nations, we are to understand Christianity as it was first established by law, upon the ruins of pagan Rome, which was abolished by Constantine the first Christian emperor. I say, the man-child here meant is Christianity in general, at that time brought forth to rule all nations; and this to be literally accomplished, not before the time when the faithful witnesses shall cast off their sackcloth, but at the time when every member of Christ's mystical body come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, into a perfect man, into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Here the state of the church might fitly be compared to a woman cloathed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. Now, as the sun and moon oftentimes in this book are expressed in a figurative manner to denote the stated laws and ordinances of an emperial authority, as the Roman empire was likened to the whole world, or the whole universe, what words could express the truth more to the purpose, as applicable to these extraordinary state affairs of the times, than to represent by these figures the state of the Church as exalted to high dignity and honour? The Church, after Heathen persecution, was clothed with the sun; the angel at the reformation from popery was clothed with a cloud. This sun and the cloud both signify power and authority to rule, govern, &c. consequently the moon, which was
under

under her feet, is the powers of heathen Rome (formerly ruled in heaven) trodden under her feet; and stars in this book (as is already made plain) represent eminent professors in the church or state; therefore the crown of twelve stars which the woman had on her head, is the doctrine of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ: and as the temple of Solomon, after it was finished, was one of the great wonders of the world, so the anti-type of the temple, the woman which was cloathed with the sun, &c. which also is said to be a great wonder in heaven; a wonder indeed! because it was so remarkable that the like had never been seen before, that a Christian emperor should reign and rule in favour of the Christian church, which by the Roman emperors were persecuted to the highest degree of cruelty for the space of three hundred years. Now to confirm the truth of the whole we are here again called upon to observe the connection between the types and the anti-types.

In the first place we are to consider, that the man child which is said to be brought forth at that same time to rule all nations with a rod of iron; the child caught up to God and to his throne, alludes to the preservation of Joash, in the time of Althaliah's usurpation, when she put to death all the rest of the royal family, *2 Kings* xi. 2, 3. Jehosheba took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain; and he was hid in the house of the Lord six years: he was with a nurse kept safe in

one of the chambers of the temple, until he was brought out by Jehoiada the high priest, and restored to the kingdom of David. This is the anti-type answerable to the type as aforesaid. Christianity, after it was by law established in the earth, like Joash shall be preserved in God's sanctuary, from the great red dragon, which was ready to devour it as soon as it was born; and during the time of the woman's continuance in the wilderness, the child should be trained up for his throne, and that neither the beast nor the false prophet should ever bereave him of his birth-right, until the same child should arrive to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and then sit with Christ in his throne, even as king, sitting in the throne of his father David: He that overcometh, saith Christ, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: (and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers) even as I received of my Father: and I will give him the morning star, *Rev. ii. 26—28.*

Now this period of 1260 days during the stay of the woman in the wilderness, is to be taken for so many years, because we find it to be the same number of years, from the time when Christianity was at first established by law, by means of the first Christian emperor, until the reformation, when that mighty angel came down from heaven, and appeared with the cloud of God's glorious

glorious power, effected by a body of excellent divines, and by political governors.

Again, this definite number of days and months are otherwise represented, as by a time, times, and half a time; the reason that this measure of time is so variously represented, and so often repeated, is in order to discover the beginning or rise of the beast; for although there has been many anti-christs from the beginning that has troubled the church, as was in the apostles days, and ever since, yet one kind in particular is spoken of who sit in the temple of God, unto whom power was given over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, which is called a beast that have risen out of the sea, that is, of the Roman government, having seven heads and ten horns; by the seven heads we are to understand seven distinct governments of which there were kings or kingdoms that should give their power and strength unto the beast, for the space of forty-two prophetic months: and unto the woman that fled unto the wilderness were given two wings of a great eagle, to fly there into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent, chap. xii. Now, this serpent is the devil, or satan, that deceiveth the whole world; his agents, the remains of the powers of the old Roman empire, (which is called the dragon) who was cast out of his kingdom by the man child who was to rule all nations, and when that dragon saw that he was cast out into the earth, he persecuted the woman

which brought forth the man-child; for this cause the dragon gave unto the beast his power, his seat and great authority, unto whom also was given a mouth, speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months, chap. xiii.

As to what is said of the dragon standing before the woman that was ready to be delivered, to devour her child as soon as it was born, chap. xii. 4. cannot be applied to the persecution of the church effected by anti-christ as above, as soon as Christianity was brought forth, as by law established in the earth, because we find that the dragon did not give his power, his seat, and his great authority unto the beast, until some hundreds of years after: nevertheless what is here said of the dragon essaying to destroy Christianity, as it was established by law, very justly may be considered in having a reference to the first division among churchmen, after the settling of that little while of universal peace, whereby the seventh seal began to be opened; but particularly touching the Arian heresy, which deny the divinity of our Lord, as God equal with the Father, for then the most part of the Christian world became Arians; the whole tend with destructive wars, in which the three sons of Constantine were engaged, is figured out by a storm of hail and fire mingled with blood; and this when the first angel began to sound with his trumpet, chap. viii. 7.

But

But as neither the dragon nor the Arian heresy is that anti-christ who was to continue forty-two months; but the beast with seven heads and ten horns, is that man of sin spoken of by the apostle Paul, who was to sit in the temple, unto whom the dragon gave his power, his seat, and his great authority; but this power was not given unto him all at once, but by degrees, like the morning light that shineth more and more until the perfect day; his morning began under the sound of the third trumpet, chap. viii. where it is said, that a star fell from heaven into the earth, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and fountains of waters.

In the explanation of that part of the word, as in chap. viii. I have applied it to Constantine the Great, by his misfortune in the wars he was engaged in, with the destruction of his whole family; for by the fall of this bright oriental star, Constantine, was the rise or beginning of that star spoken of in chap. ix. which fell from heaven, unto whom was given the key of the bottomless pit, when the same anti-christ was set upon his throne, judging the truth by his falshood; then it might be truly said, that the dragon gave unto him his power, his seat, and his great authority.

Now as to the time when this star appeared, Mr. Durham, in his exposition on the eighth chapter, with several others, fixes the date to begin from the year of Christ 415 to 429, and according to my own calculation, touching the
hour

hour and the day, the month and the year, in which the Turks took to prepare themselves to slay the third part of men, chap. ix. verse 15. extends to the year of our Lord 1696 or 1697, just about the time of the revolution effected by king William, which put an end to the second woe, and when the witnesses had finished their testimony. Now, if we add 1260 years, the time of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, to the year 429, when anti-christ made his first appearance in disguise, with his errors corrupting the pure doctrine of the gospel, it will bring us to the year of our Lord 1689. Now it plainly appears how we ought to state the beginning of the woman flying into the wilderness (or to a retire place) which is twice mentioned in chap. xii. but variously represented; the beginning of which was when the woman brought forth her man-child, that is, when the religion of Christ was by law established in the world about the year of Christ 300, until the year 1560, just a period of 1260 years, ending about the time of queen Elizabeth (of happy memory) who reigned 45 years in England, after the decease of bloody queen Mary.

Again, the two wings of a great eagle, which was given to the woman, relate particularly to her flight in the wilderness from the face of the serpent, and is when anti-christ appeared in the temple of God as the man of sin which was to be revealed in his time, the beginning of which was, as is already fixed to the year 429, when the

woman received her two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. These expressions have an allusion to the prophet Daniel's vision concerning the many remarkable things that should come to pass in the last days, where he is directed in the vision to shut up the words, and seal the book, even till the time of the end, chap. xii. And one said to the man cloathed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard (says Daniel) the man cloathed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand, and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time, and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the powers of the holy people, all these things shall be fulfilled. But Daniel not understanding the meaning of these expressions, said again, O, my Lord, when shall be the end of these things? But he received no direct answer, but said, Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up, and sealed till the time of the end; that is, till when the anti-types, as fulfilled in Christ under the dispensation of the gospel, were to disclose the secret; by which we find that a time, times, and half a time, is the same to 42 prophetic months; for twelve months makes a time, or an appointed time, 24 months are times, and six months half a time, in all 42 months, equal to

to 1260 days, or years, counting 30 days for a month. Now the 12 months is an appointed time, in which the woman was to fly from the face of the serpent, which have 360 years, and fills up the measure of time from the beginning of anti-christ's appearing in disguise as a representative of the star falling from heaven, as is already mentioned, fixed to the year 429; and if to this be added the appointed time, or 360 years, brings us to the year 789, when anti-christ was set upon his throne, under the sound of the fifth trumpet, which is figured out as a star that fell from heaven unto the earth; to whom was given the key of the bottomless pit, as in chap. ix. The two appointed times, which is 24 months, are equal to 720 years. This again, when added to the year 789, when anti-christ was set on his throne, brings us to the year 1509, near by the beginning of the reformation. Again, half a time is 6 months, equal to 180 years; when added to the year 1509, brings us to the year of Christ 1689, just upon the revolution, the very year when king William and queen Mary were crowned as defenders of our faith, and as friends of the protestant persuasion, by which the fifth vial was poured out on the seat of the beast, here in Great Britain, the chief of the protestant powers; where it was made manifest, that the kingdom of the beast was full of darkness, and those that wandered after him gnawed their tongues for pain, chap. xvi. 10.

I come

I come now to enquire how this calculation agrees with what remains yet to be considered of the eleventh chapter concerning the witnesses.

Verses 7—13. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an half, the spirit of life from God entered into them; and they stood upon their feet, and great fear came upon all them that saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them; and the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand; and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Now the time was accomplished for laying down the powers, and of scattering of God's holy people,

people, the Christians, answerable to that fulfilled in the type by Antiochus, at the time of the prophanation of the second temple, after the end of 1260 years. When the witnesses had finished their testimony against the corruptions of the times, and against the tyrannical proceedings of the man of sin, the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit, who all along have maintained popish errors and delusions, even he, who is king over the locusts, that came out of the smoke of the pit, chap. ix. the same was to rise very furiously, in order to kill and destroy the protestants. The devil came down, having great wrath, knowing he had but a short time; and made war with the faithful witnesses of Christ, after they had finished their testimony, and killed them; that is, they were rendered incapable of following their ministerial function, the exercise of their ministerial charge, according to their constitutional settlement—as watchmen of the house of God, whose special work is to be faithful: here did the beast think of changing times and laws, or overturn the protestant government, and consequently cast the truths of the gospel down to the ground, and triumph over all the true friends of the reformation; insomuch, that they of the people, kindreds, and tongues, and nations, as is said, saw their dead carcasses three days and a half, exposed to open view, in the street of the great city, &c. and would not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves: by this we are to understand, that the protestant powers at that

that time, during the space of three years and an half, might well be compared to dead bodies, which by the powers of darknes was overthrown from bearing rule, and condemned by the king, fwaying the fcepter on the Britifh throne. Hence it is, that their enemies rejoiced, and fent gifts one to another, becaufe thefe two prophets (even the faithful witneffes of Jefus) tormented them that dwelt upon the earth. Here they were expofed openly to the ridicule, fcorn, and contempt of all their implacable enemies, in the ftreets of the great city, which fpiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where alfo our Lord was crucified. The abomination of the church of Rome, to wit, her grofs errors in doctrine, her fuperftitious rites and ceremonies in will-worship, together with all her tyrannical proceedings againft the true worfhippers of God, is that fpiritual Sodom and Egypt, where alfo our Lord was crucified, in whole ftreet the faithful witneffes were flain, particularly during the reign of king James the Second of England, and the Seventh of Scotland, which began in the year 1685, until his abdication December the 12th 1688, after the Prince of Orange landed at Torbay November the 5th. Now when this fpace of three years and odds were accomplifhed, the fpirit of life from God entered into the flain witneffes, and fet them upon their feet. The effects of the revolution by King William have reftored gospel privileges, and fettled the affairs of ftate in fuch a manner, as that it might be truly

truly said, that the witnesses was set upon their feet, which caused great fear and terror to fall upon the contrary party, even all them that saw then the voice of Providence in their delivery from the powers of darkness. God's faithfulness made manifest in the accomplishment of the promises sounding loudly in their ears, is that great voice from heaven, which said to them, Come up hither: their ascending into heaven in a cloud, means a manifest discovery of God's special favour, in their protection from such an imminent danger, and by the favourable smiles of Divine Providence were exalted to heaven and glory, that is, to honour and preferment, by authority of the civil powers, in the sight of all men, to the consternation and confusion of all their enemies; for at the same hour, that is, at the same time of the revolution there was a great earthquake, which signify a dreadful judgment to come upon the Popish party, by which the tenth part of their great city fell, which is one of the ten kingdoms falling from Rome, the effects of which brought that judgment of the fifth vial, on the seat of the beast, which was to be compleated by the pouring out of the seventh vial, under the sound of the seventh trumpet.

Now in the ruins of this tenth part of the great city, which fell by that earthquake, seven thousand men were found slain; which prophecy, according to computation, was literally fulfilled in the year 1746, in the destruction of seven thousand of the Jacobite party, and the remnant of them

them were affrighted to such a degree that they despair of ever recovering the loss of the tenth part of their great city, and therefore cannot but now acknowledge that the Lord indeed was in the earthquake, fulfilling his promises to the church.

It is evident that this heaven, into which the witnesses ascended, is not to be understood of the heaven above where Christ's glorified body is, even where the spirits of just men are made perfect after they depart this life; neither is it to be understood simply of the kingdom of heaven, into which all believers do enter by their regeneration whilst under persecution; but it is to be understood a state in the government, whereby gospel privileges are restored and maintained to make way for the coming of Christ's kingdom on earth, which in a little time should appear when the seventh trumpet begin to sound, a heaven in which the witnesses have had a more full manifestation of Christ's glory and matchless beauty than when they prophesied in sackcloth, else it could not be a heaven to them. And however insignificant the powers of the civil government appear to many Christians, with respect to the constituting of a church, yet in as much as gospel privileges are settled and established by undeniable authority, and the same defended by the civil powers in opposition to that of popery, it is therefore called heaven; thus it is plain that the powers of the government, even when in the hands of heathens, the Roman em-

N

perors,

perors, is called heaven, the same as has departed in their destruction, like the scroll of a book when it is rolled together, chap. vi. 14. Also, Capernaam exalted into heaven, that is, highly honoured with peculiar privileges, by which they had authority to bear rule as the sons and daughters of God, according to that constitutional settlement under the law of Moses, but was to be brought down to hell, because they believed not, nor regarded the work of Christ, the Saviour of the world; for which cause they were deprived of all these valuable privileges of having authority to execute judgment as magistrates, or even as gods, as the word imports; and all this was remarkably fulfilled according to our Saviour's prediction in the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. These settled privileges peculiar to the nation of the Jews, is that heaven and that earth prophesied of before by the prophet *Haggai*, chap. ii. which remained to be shaken, as the apostle Paul farther explains it, saying, Whose voice then (at the giving of the law) shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. *Heb. xii. 26, 27.*

Verse 14. The second wo is past, and behold, the third wo cometh quickly.

The second wo began, when the first wo ended,

ended, chap. ix. verse 12. about the time when the Greek church was destroyed by the Turks; the time that the Ottoman family took to prepare themselves in this, is said to be for an hour, and a day, a month and a year; an hour, according to the prophetic stile, is a fortnight, a day is a year, a month is thirty days, a year of thirty days in a month is 360 years, in all 391 years, and some days, which number of years preparation ended when Constantinople was taken by the Turks, about the year of our Lord 1300. Now if we double this number for the evening and the morning of the Turks whole day of slaying the third part of men, so as to add 391 to the year 1300, according to the same time as before the date 1300, it brings us to the year of Christ 1691, about the time of the revolution as before, which put an end to the second wo, answerable to all former calculations. Now the second wo being past, and the third wo to come quickly, holds out that the sixth trumpet, which began with the second wo in the destruction of the Greek church by the Turks, doth also include the changes and alterations brought about by the reformation until the revolution. For when the tenth part of the city fell by the earthquake, the fifth vial was poured out on the seat of the beast, and this was fulfilled when one of the ten kingdoms totally fell from Rome by the revolution. And as the fifth vial was poured out on the seat of the beast by the revolution, effected by king William, there remains only the sixth vial after the revolution, to

be poured out on the river Euphrates, before the seventh angel begin to sound; a plain demonstration, and a proof sufficient to hold it for truth, as was proposed in the method of expounding the seventh verse of the tenth chapter, that the sixth trumpet comprehend six of the vials, and that the seventh trumpet is cotemporary with the seventh vial, which begins with the finishing of the mystery of God.

The Voice of the Seventh Angel sounding with his Trumpet.

Verſes 15—19. And the ſeventh angel ſounded, and there were great voices in heaven, ſaying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Chriſt, and he ſhall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders which ſat before God on their ſeats, fell upon their faces, and worſhipped God, ſaying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God almighty, which art, and waſt, and art to come; becauſe thou haſt taken to thee thy great power, and haſt reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they ſhould be judged, and that thou ſhouldeſt give reward unto thy ſervants the prophets, and to the ſaints, and them that fear thy name, ſmall and great, and ſhouldeſt deſtroy them which deſtroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was ſeen in his temple the ark of his teſtament: and there

Chap. xi. SOUND HIS TRUMPET. 185

there were lightning, and voices, and thundrings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

We come now to the sounding of the seventh or last trumpet, the end of all prophetic visions, joined to the latest period of time, when all things shall be fulfilled which were spoken of by the prophets.

As to what is here said by the kingdoms of the world to become the Lord's, &c. let it be considered, that those nations and kingdoms which before walked in darkness under the dominion of Satan, are under the sound of this trumpet brought to know and to acknowledge the truth, as it is in Christ. The great voices in heaven sheweth the universality of this glorious change, which extend to all the nations of the earth, for all nations shall come and worship before him, chap. xv. 4. Again, the kingdoms of the world to become the Lord's, and of his reigning for ever and ever, holdeth forth the compleat victory over the powers of darkness in this world. When peace and truth shall issue as a stream like the rivers of waters at noon-tide of the day, when the knowledge of the Lord overflow the earth as the waters do the seas; then shall the Christian church be exalted to the highest degree of honour and glory in this world, according to the word of the Lord by the prophets, *Isai.* ii. 2—4. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all na-

tions shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

As to what is said, that the Lord our God, and his Christ, shall reign for ever and ever, imports, that there shall be no interposing of his reigning as before, when anti-christ was sitting in the temple of God, opposing and exalting himself above the God of gods, *2 Thess. ii.* It is true, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and always has reigned in the midst of all his opposers; for from everlasting to everlasting he is God, and our Lord Jesus has reigned in the midst of all his and our enemies, even at the time when the church (whom he had purchased with his blood) under heathen emperors were persecuted to the highest degree of cruelty, as it was when it was delivered from that tyranny in Constantine's day, the first Christian emperor; and he has reigned the whole of the time of the beasts prevailing over the saints, even when he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, as at
the

the time of the end, when that man of sin shall be destroyed by the brightness of his coming. Christ always has, and ever will reign, until all things be put under his feet; and when his witnesses were clothed in sackcloth for the space of 1260 years, he then reigned and ruled in the hearts of his people by faith, yea, the man Christ actually hath reigned over his and our enemies ever since he arose from the dead, for then all power was given unto him in heaven and on earth. But this spiritual reign of Christ has not at all times alike been made manifest, and when his judgments are made manifest, it is said, all nations shall come and worship before him, chap. xv. 4. and when all nations shall worship before him, Christ's spiritual reign, in his members, shall be made manifest by a bodily reigning, which shall continue for ever and ever.

This bodily reigning of Christ in his members, the holy apostle Paul desired to see, but could not see it, saying, What is man that thou should be mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him. thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownest him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet, for in that he put all in subjection under him; he left nothing that is not put under him; but now, says the apostle, we see not yet all things put under him, *Heb. ii. 6--8*. This he saith, when discoursing of the suffering state of the Christian church, and the glory which was to be revealed in restoring of all things, For I reckon, saith

he, that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God: for the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope: because the creature it self also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now: and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body, *Rom. viii. 19--23*. The apostle here doth not simply speak of the glorified saints in heaven after the last resurrection, but in a figure speaks of the militant church to become triumphant, where he in the singular number expresses it, the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body, that is, the body of the militant church redeemed from all the slavery and bondage of tyranny. This is that whole creation which groaned and travailed in pain from the beginning, even the whole Jewish church as well as that of the Christians, until the bringing in of the Jews with the fulness of the Gentile world; then, and not till then, the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Verse 16. And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God.

It is remarkable, that in all John's prophetic visions concerning the glory of Christ's kingdom, he makes mention of four and twenty elders sitting on their seats before the throne of God, cloathed in white raiment, and having on their heads crowns of gold.

I have already shewn at the beginning, what we are to understand by the four beasts and the four and twenty elders; therefore shall only observe here, that as the Jewish church had twelve foundation stones, with the names of the twelve patriarchs written upon them, of whom sprang the twelve tribes of Israel; so the Christian church have twelve foundations, and on them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, chap. xxi. 14. and this to shew the necessary connection there is between the law and the gospel, and between the types and their anti-types; when both are united under one jurisdiction, make, as it were, four and twenty ruling elders, sitting on their seats cloathed in pure white, holding a testimony to the truth of revelation in the evening of the law, and in the morning of the gospel, until at last the Lord unveils every type in the anti-type, fulfilling all the prophecies and promises to all the members of Christ's mystical body under one head, of one holy catholic, or universal church. These four and twenty elders

elders fall down on their faces, and with the profoundest reverence, and with the deepest humility, worship and glorify God, who liveth for ever and ever.

Verse 17. Saying, we give thee thanks, O Lord God almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

In these words there are two things to be considered, First, The high praises and thanksgivings offered up by the four and twenty elders, even to the Lord God almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come. Secondly, The reason given, or ground of this their fervent zeal and devout exercise, is, because God hath taken to himself his Great power, and hast reigned.

Our blessed Lord Jesus has told us, that without him we can do nothing; he is not only the way to everlasting happiness, but he also is true happiness itself, namely, the truth and the life; therefore he is our shield and our exceeding great reward; and as there are nothing more can fill our hearts with a grateful sense of his love to us than the displays of his glory and matchless excellency, so there can be nothing more prevalent to move us to the duty of praises and thanksgivings to almighty God, than the manifestations of his glorious perfection shining through the channel of the word.

And if in past ages of the church, even at times of the severest and hardest dispensations of providence,

providence, a view of the glory of Christ's kingdom afforded matter of praises and adoration by them who had seen it a far off; how much more must it fill the hearts and souls of those who shall reap the fruits of it in its perfection, to be as the twenty-four elders sitting on their seats round about the throne of God, cloathed in white raiment, with crowns of gold upon their heads, and casting their crowns before the throne, falling upon their faces, and lifting up their voices to celebrate the praises due to the Lord God almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because he has taken to himself his great power, and hast reigned?

Now this great power of almighty God, which he at the sounding of this seventh trumpet shall take to himself, is the wonderful displays of his glorious perfection to the bringing in of his ancient people the Jews, when the veil shall be taken off their hearts in the finishing of the mystery of God, who at the same time will restore the kingdom again to Israel; as is plainly told us by our Saviour himself, in his answering his disciples request, just before his ascension into glory; as we have it in the first chapter of the Acts of the apostles and 6th and 7th verses, When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

I know

I know some by this thought it presumptuous to enquire for the times and the seasons when this grand event shall come to pass, because it was not for the apostles themselves to know of it: but do not we find in the gospel, according to the four evangelists, that the apostles were ignorant in many things, whilst Christ himself personally was present with them; it was expedient therefore for them that Christ should depart and enter into his glory, and send the promise of the Father, for if he would not depart, the Comforter would not come; who, at his coming, taught them all things, and brought all things to their remembrance; as also, shewed them things to come: thus the wisdom of God ordered it so, that they should remain ignorant of many things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven, until Christ entered into his glory, which afterwards were to be revealed when the canon of the scriptures were made perfect; but after the out-pourings of the Holy Ghost in the day of pentecost, we read no more of their ignorance; and we are sure that the times and the seasons of this glorious event, when God shall take to himself his great power, was revealed to the apostle John, else how could he give us such a perfect (though a mysterious) description of all the remarkable changes and alterations which came to pass in church and state, and what will happen from his time until the end of the world; and therefore it is no presumption, but rather a duty incumbent upon us to enquire into the know-
ledge

ledge of these things which God has revealed; especially since there are special blessings promised to him that read and peruse the words of the prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand, chap. iii. and herein the Lord God almighty reigneth, by taking to himself his great power under the sound of the seventh or last trumpet, which universally proclaim Christ's absolute sovereignty, causing all nations of the earth to submit to his government, for out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God: and he had on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords, chap. xix. 15, 16.

Verse 18. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

These awful expressions do point directly to the last and general judgment, according to the series laid down in confirmation of the seventh trumpet, and the seventh vial to contemporate with, and to belong to the same time, and events. When I compare the judgment described in the series of prophecy, to what are spoken of in the Revelations, I am induced to believe that what

is there spoken of concerning the last judgment, ought not to be taken literally, in respect to that change the last trumpet brings upon the material world at the last day, but are to be understood figuratively, in respect to the change it brings upon the stated affairs of the church, as it is a world of spiritual privileges; under this consideration I take all the remarkable passages that are spoken in imitation of the last general judgment to extend no farther than to the bringing in of the body of the Jews, with the fulness of the Gentile world. In this view we come to form a true idea of what are held forth in these words; And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, &c. Now the nations to be angry, and God's wrath being come, certainly must signify that desperate opposition from nations and kingdoms under anti-christ's jurisdiction, when the beast and the king's of the earth, and their armies shall be gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army, chap. xix. 19. For the day of vengeance which is in God's heart, and the year of recompence for the controversy of Zion is come when the seventh vial of God's wrath shall be poured out upon all nations and kingdoms, according to the word of the Lord by the prophet Zephaniah, chap. iii. 8, 9. Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them

them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.

Now, as to the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and a reward be given to God's servants the prophets, and to the saints, &c. is a metaphor set forth and must mean not only the dead and lifeless state of all the ungodly that shall be found out of Christ, at that great day of account, when all shall be judged by the word, and their own consciences; but, the word has a special reference to the dead and lifeless state and condition of God's ancient people the Jews, who are beloved, (for the Father's sake) when there shall be a manifest token of the recompence of reward given (if received) to God's servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear God's name, small and great; which reward we are to understand to be something of a certain pledge given in hand, in token of that exceeding great reward that shall be given in the resurrection at the last judgment, that is, when this corruptable must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, *1 Cor. xv. 53*. And this manifest token of God's love and faithfulness shall be given in pledge of that exceeding great reward due unto the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear God's name, small and great, and is that complete victory obtained over the powers of darkness even in this world, or this earth, by

Christ's faithful witnesses, which victory may be comprehended in these three things. 1st. An absolute freedom from the reigning power of sin. 2dly, A power granted to keep God's commandments in thought, word, and deed, in proportion to that willingness which are or shall be wrought in every believer, small and great. 3dly, A deliverance from the deceitfulness of Satan, and malignity of wicked and ungodly men.

This is what we are to understand by that saying, That the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, *Rom. viii. 21.* Now this creature is every new creature belonging to that whole creation which groaned and travailed in pain from the beginning of the world, until the time of the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body; I mean the body of the militant church, which are to be delivered after this manner from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. For in this our present state, there is a will to do good wrought in the heart of every believer in Christ, yet often complain (and that not without cause) that we cannot do what we would, because of a body of sin and death that prevails over the best of men to their great grief and sorrow; as it was with the apostle, When I would do good, evil is present with me, *Rom. vii.* But when we come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, then

then our freedom of doing, and ability to perform, shall be equal in proportion to that will which is in us. Without this belief we cannot, from the heart, pray according to the third petition of the Lord's prayer, which is, Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Besides this manifest token given in pledge of that exceeding great reward, as a ground of thanksgiving, it is farther added, as in the last clause of the verse, And shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth. Now those earth destroyers are all such as are, or have been, enemies to the truths of the gospel, who oppose the preaching of the word, the leaves of the tree of life, ordained for the healing of the nations, chap. xxii. 2. They are the generation of vipers that has destroyed the righteous, who are the pillars of the earth; but the transgressors shall be destroyed together, the end of the wicked shall be cut off, but the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, he is their strength in time of trouble, *Psalms* xxxvii. These also are grounds of praises and thanksgivings to be offered up to the great God by the whole church, seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble them, *2 Thess.* i. 6.

Verse 19. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thundrings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

O

There

There are three things also in these words that requires distinctly to be considered: First, The temple of God, which is said to be opened in heaven. Secondly, How it may be said that the ark of the testament is seen in the temple of God. Thirdly, The fatal consequences of these alarming scenes, namely, the lightnings, the voices, the thunders, and the earthquake.

What hath been already said concerning the New Testament temple, and the connection between the types and their anti-types, may suffice to convince the Jews as well as Christians, that although the kingdom shall be restored again to Israel, and the body of the Jews again ingrafted into their own olive tree, in that great day of God almighty when all things shall be restored according to the promise; yet for any thing that is here said of the temple being opened in heaven holds no grounds to argue from thence, that the Jews are to have their old ceremonial way of worshipping God re-established; this would be preferring shadows to the substance, or types to the body; which shadows or types have vanished away at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he first appeared in the world, cloathed with our nature, who was the true temple which the Jews had destroyed, and whom he reared up the third day, according to his own words, *John* ii. 19. who also was the body or substance of the sacrifices and burnt offerings, and who hath obtained a better or a more excellent ministry than the high priests under the law, by how much

Chap. xi. SOUND HIS TRUMPET. 199

also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Therefore, this temple which was to be opened in heaven under the sound of the seventh trumpet is a manifest discovery of a glorious spiritual house or temple, the anti-type of the holy of holies, a plain demonstration of heaven itself, where the ark of God's testament is seen in the church.—The reason why it is here called the temple, and not the church of God, is, in order to shew again the connection between the types and their anti-types, as has been already often shewn, and here do shew, that the temple in the law was divided into two distinct parts, namely the holy, and the most holy place; the former called the first tabernacle, wherein were the ten golden candlesticks, and the table of the shew bread; and after the second vail, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all, which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord, overlaid round about with gold, &c. *Heb. ix.*

Now the holy, and the most holy places, represent (typically) the two different church states under the gospel, or two different dispensations peculiar to the New Testament temple, which have respect first to the militant church; secondly, to the church triumphant; the first called the holy place, the second most holy, and this because it resembled heaven itself in purity, power, and glory. This militant church and the church triumphant, which is also Christ's mystical body,

of whom every true believer is a member, whose bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, all making up one spiritual house unto the Lord. Now the opening of this temple supposeth it to be first shut before it was opened, and to have a visible being even before it was shut; for as the temple in the law was shut up at times of general defection, when men generally departed from following on to know the Lord, and from the life and power of godliness; and the same temple opened again, when peace and truth flourished, when holiness in heart and in life generally had taken place, received and promoted from the highest to the lowest, even by kings, magistrates, and by persons of all ranks and degrees; likewise the New Testament temple, when it was first established by law in the days of the first Christian emperor, had a famous and a most magnificent appearance, and a wonder before the eyes of all men, like unto the first temple in the law, as it were in heaven, not only owned and approved of by the God of Israel as his house, which he delighteth to honour by his own spiritual presence, but by the favourable smiles of Divine Providence exalted to honour and glory, when kings became nursing fathers, and queens became nursing mothers for the children of God. Now this temple truly may be said to be shut up, during the time in which the witnesses prophesied in sackcloth, the same time when the outward court were given to the Gentiles, and the holy city trodden under foot for the space of forty

two months, and opened again at the reformation from popery, when there was a manifest discovery given to the true standard of divine worship, according to that constitutional settlement, founded only on the authority of the sacred scriptures, through which the true reformed religion were made manifest, especially in holding forth the doctrine of Christ's all-sufficiency, as an all-sufficient Saviour in the preaching of the word, and administering of the sacraments according to Christ's own appointment as he has delivered the ordinances to his church, even as it is already declared by many gospel churches or congregations, as the ten golden candlesticks, the lamps, and the table of the shew bread, as was in the holy place of the temple most amply typified.

But seeing, as is said, that the ark of God's testament was seen in his temple; we may from thence conclude that this opening of the temple of God in heaven relates to a far greater discovery of the mystery of Godliness, and of the glory of the Christian religion than ever yet appeared to the world; and this will appear undeniable if we consider the place where the ark of God stood in the temple, not in the first tabernacle called the holy place, which was a manifest representation of the church militant state, but in that tabernacle within the second vail, called the holy of holies, which was a figure of heaven itself, whither our forerunner has entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the

order of Melchisedec, *Heb.* vi. 20. But before the ark of the covenant of the Lord can be seen in the New Testament temple, the vail between the holy and the most holy place must be removed, that a way to the holiest of all might be made manifest ; and this is done by an extraordinary measure of the Spirit of Christ that shall be given to clear and open up such dark passages of scripture as are necessary, in order to take away the vail of Moses from off the hearts of the Jews in their reading of the Old Testament, which vail (says the apostle) is done away in Christ ; seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech, and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look unto the end of that which was abolished, but their mind were blinded ; for until this day the same vail remaineth untaken away, in the reading of the Old Testament, but even until this day when Moses is read, the vail is upon their hearts ; nevertheless, when it shall turn unto the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now, the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, 2 *Cor.* iii. Here we plainly see, that every thing spoken of as pertaining to the kingdom of heaven, and of the gospel church, were under the law of Moses veiled over with types and shadows, not only with regard to those positive precepts contained in the law, but the very outward actions

tions tending to their ceremonial way of worship, &c. from the beginning to the end thereof, have their anti-types under the gospel. And therefore the apostle says, that the law is our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; that is, by learning from the mouth of the law how to improve in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; and this by our seeing and believing all the law fulfilled in Christ. By this we come to see how necessary it is to observe the connection between the law and the gospel, and between the types and their anti-types: I say, this indeed is necessary, because it is the way by which the spirit illuminates our understandings in the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ. For we find that the apostle, in speaking plainly of the heavenly things, looks into the glass of the law, where he beholds (by the Spirit of the Lord) a glorious discovery of Christ Jesus; and saith, but we all with open face, as in a glass, behold the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, &c. Now the vail being taken away, the ark of God is seen in the temple, which is the glory of the Christian religion, as it was with the Jews under the law; for the glory was departed from Israel when the ark of God was taken by the Philistines, 1 Sam. iv. 21. And when it was brought again, and put in its proper place, it was a manifest token and a pledge of God's glorious presence; so it is with the Israelite Christians. For when the second vail is taken away, that is, when the holy scriptures are

made plain and intelligibly clear and easy to be understood by the Spirit of the Lord, the ark of the covenant will be seen, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenants; which is a comprehensive view of the fulness that is in Christ, when communicated to believers. For the golden pot that had manna represents that heavenly manna, the seeds of grace, the gracious influence of the Holy Ghost, which Christ had within himself when he was here upon earth; and which he, by the Holy Spirit, communicates to his church in every time of need: and this more and more, as his members are advanced in their spiritual stature, until they arrive at the fulness of stature of a perfect man in Christ. For of his fulness we have all received, and grace for grace, for the law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, *John i. 16, 17.*

Again: Aaron's rod that had budded, represents that power belonging to Christ, the high-priest of our profession, whereby he pours out the seven last plagues upon the anti christian kingdom, as Aaron the type did by his rod in plaguing of the Egyptians; and as Aaron's rod budded and blossomed, and yielded almonds for the house of Levi in the tabernacle of witnesses, after due trial had been made who should be accounted worthy to approach into God's immediate presence, in the faithful discharge of the duties required of those that worship at his altar,

Numb.

Numb. xvii. 8. so shall the rod of Christ, which has already blossomed and budded, and will bring forth ripe fruit for the house of his faithful witnesses that worship at his altar, to the great disappointment of hypocrites, and every false pretender, according to his promise to the church of Philadelphia. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie) behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name, *Rev.* iii. 9.—12. Again: the tables of the covenant were the tables of the law, (to wit) the ten commandments, written by the finger of God upon two tables of stone; and this to represent the stony hearts of the Jews, according to the way and manner that covenant was first made with them, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, which were delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, by which God bound himself in covenant to fulfill
all

all his promises, God himself to be their God, and they his people, for ever, on condition of a perfect and perpetual obedience to his laws and commands; and threatened hell, death and destruction, upon the breach of the same. Now as this covenant was broken, the breakers of it falls under the curse denounced against a disobedient and gainsaying people; as it is written, Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, *Deut. xxvii. 26.* but this holy law of God Christ had within his heart, as the tables of the testimony were put in the ark of the covenant. And as the first covenant was broken, there was a necessity to find a place for a second covenant, which was established upon better promises; for if the first covenant had been faultless, says the apostle, there should have been no place sought for the second. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Juda, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord, for this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every

every man his brother, saying, Know ye the Lord? for all shall know me from the least to the greatest; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more, *Heb. viii. 7—12*. Herein, we see the mercy seat was put above the ark of the covenant, to shew that God's tender mercy are over all his other works; as also, that mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, are met together in Christ; for all the promises of God are in him, yea, and in him, Amen. Now when the ark of God's testament is seen in the most holy place, then God's judgment and his truth shall be manifested forth before all nations, in the accomplishment of his promises, according to his faithful word, declared by his servants the prophets, and confirmed by the joint testimony of his holy apostles, as the cherubims of glory placed in the most holy place typically represented.

The lightnings, the voices, the thundrings, the earthquake, and the great hail, denote terrible judgment, not only the storms of God's vengeance spoken of in scripture, which are to come down on the heads of all such as shall be found enemies to the truth of revelation, especially when the ark of God's testament is seen in his temple, but it includes also that universal change that shall be upon the whole face of affairs in nations and kingdoms, when all things shall be made new according to these words; And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the

208 THE SEVENTH ANGEL, &c. Ch. xi.

the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God, And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall by my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death. *Rev. xxi. 1—8.*

THE

T H E
 MYSTERY OF GOD opened
 CONCERNING THE
 HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

THE church of the living God, (the ground and pillar of the truth, otherwise called *the mystical body of Christ*, of whom every true believer is a member) is variously represented in the holy scriptures, by parables, allegories, and figurative expressions. Under these similitudes or figurative representations lie the mystery of God relating to his church, as it were sealed up; especially from the men of the world, who have not the Spirit of Christ; for none truly can understand that language, but those only to whom it is given them by the Holy Spirit, and all the children of God at all times are taught to understand it according to that measure of the Spirit which is given; for many shall be purified, and made white, and tried. But the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand, *Dan. xii. 10.* for all those who have not the Spirit of Christ, they are none of his; and therefore all things relating to the kingdom of heaven are given to them in parables, that hearing they might hear, and

and not understand; and seeing they might see, and not perceive: but the mystery of God shall be finished, that is, disclosed, when the Jews shall be called; and therefore a large measure of the Spirit must be given to some, to accomplish that great and glorious work, which shall be like life from the dead: and this pouring out of the spirit shall be about the time of the end, when the man of sin shall be revealed and consumed with the Spirit of Christ's mouth, and shall be destroyed by the brightness of his coming.

To unfold mysteries, is, in the first place, making plain, or interpreting the holy scriptures; that is, giving the true sense and meaning of dark and mysterious passages thereof, as will appear obvious to the meanest capacity, answerable to the whole tenor of scripture. So then, according to this discovery of truth, God will effectually bring about providentially his own end and purpose.

REVELATION, Chap. xv. 5.

And after that I looked, and behold the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.

At the end of several periods, when God has had extraordinary work to do, he has been pleased to choose the poor and weak things of the world to declare his wondrous works! And as I am very sensible indeed of my own weakness and unfitness

to

to enter on such a subject as this, my convincing proofs of having the Spirit of Christ dwelling in me, is the procuring cause thereof. The Lord knows the secrets of my heart, before him I lie not; if this be not of himself, or through his assistance, let a visible mark of his displeasure overthrow all my endeavours, for a reward of my presumption and arrogance. But the Lord of Hosts is my strength, a present help in time of need; and therefore I will look up to him for his assistance, that I may be enabled with the apostle to look up and behold the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony opened in heaven. This temple of the tabernacle of the testimony which was opened in heaven, is to be understood the Christian church: its being opened in heaven, means a manifest discovery of God's favour, and of his special care, tender regard, and protection, either before or after some eminent danger; and when God of old times in mercy visited his people, it was commonly at a period, when the generality of people did least expect it; and when it was expected, and long looked for, it came in such a manner as was not at all suitable to the most polite and wise men of the world; chiefly, because the whole was attended with ascribing all the glory to God, to the staining of the pride of men. And I know not why God should be more favourable in this declined age, when men generally are so much given to please their sensual appetite, to the neglect of the things that belong to their peace. But to proceed,

The

The way how God visited his people under the dispensation of the law, was, first, by revealing his will to his servants the prophets; and the manner how this revelation had been communicated to them, was by glorious visions, which appeared to them through the types and figure of that magnificent structure, the temple of Jerusalem: but since the canon of the scriptures was fulfilled and made perfect by the apostles in the primitive state of the Christian church, it follows of necessity that the whole council and will of God is found in the holy scriptures, without any absolute dependance on any fixed place of worship in the world, and especially when the church-militant are travelling in a wilderness, having no certain dwelling place of abode, until all things be fulfilled which were spoken of by the prophets. But although the will of God, under the dispensation of the gospel, are wholly to be found in the writings of the apostles and prophets; yet the opening, or explaining the holy scriptures, are at all times most necessary; and there is a time when a more large measure of the Spirit of God also shall be necessary, in order to bring about his own wise and noble purposes, in such a manner as he himself, according to his unerring wisdom, thinks most expedient.

The temple of the tabernacle of God's testimony being opened in heaven, (as it is in the text), undoubtedly calls for the attention of those to whom it is opened; since, by the opening of the same, the mystery of God is disclosed, and the

the will of God, in the language of the holy scriptures, is more amply revealed.

I have already said, that the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony doth mean the Christian church; to this end, and for that purpose, we are led to understand the nature of that glory which was revealed to the prophets under the law, by which they came to view the glory of the sanctuary, of which the apostles expressly tells us, that the temple, and every thing in the law, were shadows of heavenly things; which was plainly held out by the apostles themselves; and by which we are to understand, that every thing in the temple, and all the things pertaining to it, is, and was given as visible outward signs or types of the body of Christ treasured up, and ready to be made manifest in proper seasons, of which many things hitherto has been but darkly revealed: and I must confess, it appears very plain to me, that it is a bad sign when men are pleased with, and content themselves to continue in the dark in things that are of the greatest moment, made manifest to us by degrees, like the morning light that shineth more and more until the perfect day. And for this, let us consider the first tabernacle which was ordered of God to be made in the wilderness, according to the pattern shewn Moses on the mount, which was an abridgement of the magnificent temple of Jerusalem; so that the court of this tabernacle, which was but one, did contain three distinct courts belonging to the temple. The first was the outward court, called the court of

the Gentiles; the second, the court of Israel; and the third, the court of the priests. This, together with the galleries, and other proper apartments belonging to the courts, without the temple, the whole represent the Old Testament dispensation; of which the tabernacle, while yet standing, was a pledge, and was very suitable to the state of the church, whilst travelling in the wilderness. Accordingly, the temple itself was divided into two distinct parts; that is, the holy, and the most holy place. Now, at the entering into the holy place from the courts of the temple, a most curious vail or hinging was placed, to signify that new and living way which was consecrated through the vail of Christ's flesh, by which the glory of the sanctuary was revealed by the death of Christ; and by means of preaching the gospel, of which all the furnitures of the holy place did most amply typify; of which I shall now endeavour, through Christ strengthening me, to explicate. In the first place, I am to observe, that Christ did not suffer within the temple, I mean, under the gospel-dispensation, which the temple of Jerusalem was a figure of; but was slain without the gate; that is, in his types and figures, upon the altar of sacrifices of burnt-offerings, which was placed without the temple in the court of the priests, according to that as is already said, in which the death of Christ was to take place under the Mosaical dispensation. As for the altar of incense placed in the holy place, it signifies a memorial or display

of the death and sufferings of Christ by the ordinary means of preaching the word, administering of the ordinances, especially prayer, praises, and thanksgiving, &c. and this to be done at proper seasons, as it were every evening and morning. By the high-priest burning these sweet incense, (through which) the saints perceive, by faith, Christ exalted at the Father's right-hand, making continual intercession for the transgressors; through whose mediation alone all prayers offered up are accepted of God, as a sweet smelling savour; also, the golden table of the shew bread, which was likewise placed in the sanctuary, doth hold forth the doctrine of the all-sufficient Saviour, able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him. The shew bread on this golden table, was renewed every Sabbath, to signify a continual supply of renewing grace, which this golden doctrine of the church holds out unto believers. Also, the ten golden candlesticks, which was placed in the holy place, represent the church-militant, as it were dispersed in the world, branched into many gospel churches, wherever the assembly of the faithful do meet, if but two or three in number, there Christ will be in the midst to bless them.

Now, lest any should doubt of the truth of these discoveries hid under the types and shadows of the holy place of the temple in the law, I shall for this, search the New Testament, and see whether or not I be mistaken. As there are many things hid in the night, of which the day light

will plainly discover; so there were many things of great importance that lay hid under the types and shadows in the law, which were made manifest by the glorious sun of righteousness, who hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel; first, I find, that the seven golden candlesticks in *Rev. i. 13.* represent the seven churches that were in Asia; and, at the same time, John declares that Christ was in the midst of them. His gracious presence, truth and faithfulness, are emblematically held forth in the 13, 14, and 15th verses of the same chapter; and without dispute, John here alludes to the holy place of the temple at Jerusalem. And our Saviour also commanded his disciples, that his own discovery of divine truths, which should not be hid under a bushel, but be set on a candlestick, that it might give light to all that are in the house; and this was to be done through their public confession in preaching the gospel to every creature of mankind, so far as there was a possibility to do it, even although attended with seeming dangers, and with the greatest difficulties. Therefore it is plain, that the ten golden candlesticks in the temple signified the militant church dispersed through the world, branched out into many gospel churches or congregations, as is already said.

I also said, that the golden table of shew bread held forth the doctrine of Christ's ability to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, and that the shew-bread, which was renewed every

every Sabbath day, can signify nothing less than a continual supply of grace to believers, in order to help them in every time of need, that their faith and hope in God might not fail, or totally be extinguished. And what can be more plain, nor more frequently mentioned in the word of God, than that Christ calleth himself the bread of life, that living bread which came down from heaven, which if a man eat thereof he should never die?

I find also, that scripture doctrine, and doctrines of men, are compared to bread in the New Testament; as our Saviour himself told his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. This the disciples at first misunderstood, imagining he found fault with them, because they had forgotten to take bread; but the Lord said to them, How is it that ye do not understand, that I spoke it not to you concerning bread; that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees; then understood they how that he bad them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, *Matt. xvi. 6—11.*

And it is also declared in a parable by our blessed Lord, that the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven, (that is, of the church), is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened, *Matt. xiii. 33.*

There is something farther to be observed, that under the law, it was not lawful for any to eat of the shew-bread save only the priests. But,

under the gospel, every true believer are priests of God and of Christ, who only have a right to take of the bread of life continually, which will never cease nor be exhausted to all the endless ages of eternity.

These are plain truths of the everlasting gospel, the heavenly things themselves, whereof every thing in the law were only but mere shadows; for it is said, that the law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did. Wherefore, says the apostle, seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech, and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which was abolished. But their minds were blinded; for, unto this day, remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which vail is done away in Christ; but even until this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn unto the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; but we all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. iii.

Now, between the holy and the most holy place, hung another most curious vail, like unto that between the courts of the Lord's house, and the holy place of the temple; as it is described, *Exod.* xxvi. 33—37. And when the holy of holies shall be made manifest, this vail shall be rent in twain

twain from top to bottom, as it was in the temple of Jerusalem at the crucifixion of our blessed Saviour, that a way to the holiest of all might be made manifest, or the church militant might become triumphant; for as the holy place of the temple was a manifest type of the militant church, so the most holy place, or the holiest of all, in like manner, wherein was the mercy-seat and the ark of the covenant overlaid with gold, was a manifest representation, not only of heaven, but most eminently a state of the church on earth resembling that of heaven above.

This, the apostle to the *Hebrews*, ch. ix. 8. when speaking of the most holy place, and the shadows of heavenly things, which the temple represented, says, The Holy Ghost; this signifying, that the way to the holiest of all could not be made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing; which is as much as to say, that the glorious state of the Messiah's kingdom on earth should not be clearly revealed, while the militant state of the church was yet standing firm. And, for this, let the present woful confusion, occasioned by many and various opinions and divisions, remarkable within these late years in these two kingdoms of Great Britain, relative to both churches and state, together with our melancholy circumstance in respect to the sad decay of the power and life of true religion, for which the love of many waxes cold: I say, let this testify, whether or not it be now time for God to work according to his glorious promise to us in his word.

Now, I hope I have made to appear by the New Testament records, that the materials of the temple in the law, were all ordained of God, as types and figures of the anti-types under the gospel; that is, the heavenly things themselves, as the body treasured up in the person of Christ. It remains now that I should consider the temple itself, by taking a view of the form and order of it; and see what grounds we have to look upon this also as types and figures of the thing signified under the gospel dispensation.

First, I find in the New Testament, that the temple in the law was a type of Christ's body; this we have by Christ's answer to the Jews, for their asking a sign from him for his exercising that authority of cleansing the temple from the filthiness of worldly traffic contracted by a set of thieves. His answer to this was as follows; Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up, *John* ii. 19. And we find John observes, that he spoke of the temple of his body. But if the temple in the law was not a type of Christ's body, this could not be a proper answer to the Jews, it being too subtil, and therefore not conformed to the simplicity that is in Christ; because there is not a word mentioned of his body, but only concerning the temple. But if the temple was (of a truth) a type of Christ's body, as there is nothing more certain than indeed it was, then Christ's answer to the Jews was just like himself, full of truth, and very much to the purpose: And if the Jews were so blind as not to be

be able to understand his meaning, surely they had nothing to blame for it but their own stupidity and wilful ignorance.

I shall now endeavour to shew, how the temple in the law truly may be said to be a type of Christ's body, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

First; The body of Christ in his low condition, before he rose from the dead, could have but very faint resemblance, considering it as the anti-type of that splendid and magnificent temple of Jerusalem. But the state of the tabernacle while travelling in the wilderness, which, for the time then present, was a pledge of the glory of the temple, doth set forth that character of the tabernacle, being a manifest type of Christ's body in his low and suffering state. But the glory of the magnificent temple, particularly during the reign of king Solomon, was undoubtedly a manifest representation of Christ's glorified body after his resurrection in his state of exaltation in the heavens above.

But if all this be not sufficient to prove, that the temple in the law was a type of Christ's glorified body, because his body is in heaven, and therefore out of the reach of our comprehension; I shall therefore, in the next place, shew, that the mystical body of Christ, which is his fulness, and the anti-type of its shadow in the law, is also under the gospel represented as a woman, a sister, a spouse, and a married wife, *Rev. xii.*
chapter

chapter throughout, *Cant.* iv. 12. and v. 9. *Rev.* xxi. 9.

By what is said concerning the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony being opened in heaven, it is manifestly demonstrated, that the mysteries which lay hid under the types and figures of the Lord's temple at Jerusalem, under the Mosaical dispensation, were clearly revealed by the gospel, even whilst the church of Christ are in a state of warfare. In like manner, what of the mysteries that are necessary to be unfolded in the church militant, shall clearly be revealed, when the veil between the holy and the most holy place shall be removed, that a way to the holiest of all might be made manifest! Therefore, in order to the removal of this veil off our hearts, I shall now endeavour, through divine assistance, to explain what I have already proposed, namely, To shew, why the church of the living God is represented in scripture as a woman, a sister, a spouse, and a married wife.

A woman. The metaphor is the church, and alludes to Eve, the first woman, made of a rib taken out of the man, in order to be a suitable companion, and an help mate for him, in a way of obedience to the man: as it is said, man was not made for the woman, but the woman for the man; so, by virtue of this relation, all churches professing the Christian religion, whether true or false, ought to be considered as the spouse of Christ, and it is fit he should claim a right of dispensing the benefit of the purchased possession

of the promised inheritance, according as they are to be found faithful to his divine laws. A sister, sheweth that mystical relation between us and Christ, who is our elder brother and kinsman, our near and dearest friend, who purchased eternal life for all his brethren and sisters that, by faith, lay hold on the covenant of redemption.

A spouse, represents that mystical union and complacency which true believers have with Christ, even although in a state of trial, resembling that intimate correspondency that naturally arise from the true love to the desired object, and that between a faithful lover and his spouse; and as there is nothing in heaven, nor on earth, so precious to the souls of believers, as Christ is, when he manifests himself to them; so there can be nothing more that filleth their souls with vehement longings, and the most anxious thoughts and pain, than the woful and dull apprehension of his departure; Christ is the believer's treasure, and the life of their souls; and if that depart, they are of all men most miserable; for when Christ withdraws the light of his countenance from a gracious soul, nothing else will comfort it; and indeed, often times in such a case all pretended friends, like Job's comforters, but add affliction to affliction.

This we see was the case of the spouse in the *Song of Solomon*, chap. v. 6. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone. My soul failed when he spake; I sought him,

him, but he gave me no answer: The watchmen that were about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me, &c. But when Christ returns to give a fresh visit to his love-sick spouse, when the soul apprehends a sensible manifestation of renewing grace, it filleth the heart with peace, joy, and consolation; and whilst, in this comfortable case, the spouse changes her tune, *Cant.* vi. 3. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine, he feedeth among the lilies.

A married wife: To signify not only that mystical union and communion, love, and obedience between Christ and the church; but also imitates, that his spouse is advanced to full stature, to the years of maturity, brought up to know herself qualified to answer the character of a faithful and loving wife, that hath the care of her children at heart, of bringing them up in the fear and love of God, walking in all his commandments, to be in the same mind, and in the same judgment, as brethren and sisters dwelling together in unity, as one amicable and well composed body gathering together, coming in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, into a perfect man, into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Thus much for the discovery of divine truths peculiar to the mystical resemblance by which the church of God is represented in scripture as a woman, a sister, a spouse, and a married wife.

Now, concerning peculiar privileges and accommodations that the spouse of Christ lawfully may

may claim a right to, in order to bring forth her children, and to qualify them answerable to that dignity conferred upon them as the sons and daughters of God: for this it is farther to be observed, that the church of God is also represented in scripture, as a house, a garden, a city, and a kingdom.

First, The church of God is represented in scripture as a house, 1 *Pet.* ii. 5. *Heb.* iii. 6. 2 *Tim.* ii. 20. 2 *Cor.* v. 1, 2. A house not only serves for a shelter to guard against the violence of the cold, storms, and tempests, but, according to that degree of knowledge, wisdom, and sagacity of the master-builder, it is wisely planned, in such a form and order, with such divers casements, as may be both agreeable and suitable for different places of resort, and furnished with all necessary accommodations and conveniencies of life, as that a whole family, or more, may reside in with comfort; and to render every one, according to his place and office, in a capacity faithfully to discharge his duty both to God and man; and all these accommodations are found in Christ; seeing that all these accomplishments are as fruits of his purchase: For it pleased the Father, that in him all fulness dwells: In my Father's house, (says Christ) are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you, &c. *John* xiv. 2.

The house of God, through all the scriptures, particularly in the New Testament, is spiritual: It is a spiritual house builded and ordered of God himself; and the stones thereof are men, lively
stones

stones indued with reason and understanding; every stone in this house is chosen of God, and precious; though perhaps refused and disallowed by men, yet formed of God to answer their use in his house, of whose stones we are, if we hold fast the beginning of our profession stedfast unto the end; or, as the apostle giveth it, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing in hope firm unto the end; which implies, that without perseverance in well-doing, in regard to the conduct of the stones of God's house, that house is in danger of being rejected of God, as not worthy the name of being called his house, like an old ruinous heap, not worthy of repair, but to be totally thrown down, that a more magnificent fabric be raised in its place.

Secondly, The church of the living God is represented in scripture as a garden inclosed and well watered; *Cant.* iv. 12. *Isai.* xli. 17—19. *Cant.* iv. 15, 16. and vi. 2. *1 Cor.* iii. 6.

There is nothing more frequently made use of in the holy scriptures, nor indeed appear to me more intelligibly to convey the truths of Christ to our understanding, in order to engage our love and affections to godliness, than that which is represented to us under the similitude of a garden; the peculiar privileges of the gospel, containing the saving graces of the Spirit of life from God are so lively represented to us in the due contemplation of a well furnished garden, that I am much astonished at and amazed to see people that are lovers of gardens, should have so little taste
for

for religion: What do these curious sorts of plants, varieties of colours, of sweet-smelling flowers, beautiful to the eyes, agreeable to the nose, and oftentimes beneficial to the taste of the mouth; I say, what doth all these represent to us of religion? Are they not proper emblems of the fruits of the sanctifying Spirit, to wit, love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith? &c. Here is where the spouse has found her beloved feeding among the lilies, until the day break, and the shadows fly away; and it is by the due exercise of complying with the motion of Holy Spirit of God, through the knowledge of the truths of the gospel, with the answer of a good conscience, that the believer is come to have his assurance of God's love, and is made to purify himself, even as Christ is pure; and therefore has the witness in himself. In this case, the spouse and her beloved meet together in Paradise, and as it were transported with the joys of heaven, as it is in the song of Solomon: My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away: for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land: the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vine with her tender grapes give a good smell: arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O! my dove that art in the clefts of the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs: let me see thy countenance,

tenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely, *Cant. ii.*

2dly, What doth labouring, tilling, and digging of the ground, in order to prepare it to receive good seed, represent to us of religion? Doth it not hold out proper emblems of the necessity of preparing our hearts through unfeigned repentance, in order to qualify and make us to receive the good seed of the word of God, that it may the better grow in our hearts, and ourselves thereby be disposed to enjoy communion with Christ, and to taste of the joys of heaven? The same may be understood of hewing and cutting down weeds, and other incumbrances of the ground, as are destructive to the growth of valuable plants, as may properly be applied to the use of purging and cleansing our hearts from the remainders of corruption which naturally arise in a state of imperfection, occasioned by luxury, idleness, and spiritual slumber. How natural and easy it is for men (even good men, of whom there are pastors of the flocks) to indulge themselves, for a time, in things very unbecoming, especially in a declined age, when wealth and plenty prove a snare, and the world make an idol of it, to the disgrace of all religions in general? And when this appears eminently, as it is at this day, what can be expected from the people, but to nourish and cherish vice and impiety; when, at the same time, holy principles, a godly life, and Christian conference is very little, or not at all regarded?

3dly,

3dly, The pleasure and beauty of a garden consists chiefly in the keeping of it clean, and to be accommodated with such proper fences as are necessary to preserve it from the danger it may be exposed to from enemies without. Just so, with regard to true piety. O! what can be more delightful than to reflect upon our conduct, when the word of God, a good conscience, and daily experience tells us, that we have endeavoured, through the divine assistance, to keep our hearts with all diligence from the pollutions of the world, and have been careful to cultivate the grace of God, not only with respect to ourselves, but in regard to others also? for true charity extends to all our brethren of mankind without exception; that is to say, to seek, and desire, and do as much as in us lies, according to our abilities, places, and stations in the world, to advance the religion of Christ. First, To ingraft it in our own minds; and then to be free, without being ashamed to own it before all men; fervently to pray, wish, and assist to remove every thing out of the way, that seem to hinder the gospel of our Lord Jesus being spread abroad, and extended to the remotest parts of the earth, that are full of the habitation of cruelty, and them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, light to arise out of obscurity.

O! how joyful it is, for to see in this Paradise, the produce of a well spent life, flourishing and yielding its precious and delicious fruits in its season, refreshed by the dew of consolations, and wa-

Q

tered

tered by the blessings of heavenly endowments, of divine influences? And if at any time it happen that doubts and fears arise in our hearts, either by our own unskilful conduct, or by wild boars out of the forest breaking in upon us, to the spoiling of our goods, through the deceitfulness of Satan, who is ready, upon every opportunity, to tempt men to believe a lie, in mistrusting God's word and faithfulness, by raising objections against God, in some remarkable trying circumstances in the course of God's providence, such as may seem sometimes contrary to expectation, by taking a view of the prosperity of wicked and ungodly men, comparing their situation with their own indigent and trying circumstances, and in the bitterness of their souls, cry out to God, It is in vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of host? But be not cast down with this, O, believer! whosoever thou art that hast been cast into this horrible pit, when thou wast in the way of thy duty, depend upon it, that in such a case it is a fore-runner of some remarkable deliverance from the powers of darkness, to thy unspeakable joy and satisfaction.

Thirdly, The church of the living God is represented also in scripture as a city; see *Heb. ii. 10. Rev. xxi. 1. Heb. xii. 22, 23.*

It is a city inhabited with people, as free-born citizens, governed only by their own laws, founded upon infallible testimonies; their magistrates are free citizens, ordained by divine appointment,

ment, and established by undeniable authority, and chosen of the citizens; whereby valuable privileges are maintained and preserved; and when occasion requires, it is put into execution, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. Now, the assembly of the faithful are the magistrates of this city, who only have authority dependent on the approbation of their own lawful Prince, to establish a cause relative to the peace, safety, and welfare of the whole city: here the King of righteousness maintains his headship as king in Zion, and as a king set up on Mount Zion. This is that city that hath no need of the sun of human invention, nor of the moon of mere human policy to give it light; because the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who is the sun of righteousness, is the light thereof.

Great and glorious things are spoken of and promised to this city, which surely will be fulfilled in its time, and shall soon be accomplished; the whole earth shall be filled with its glory; for there shall no nation, city, town, or country under heaven but shall be made to bow to this city, submit to its laws, and worship before its feet. Though it often has been oppressed and trodden under foot by the Gentiles, or such as do apostatize into the idolatrous worship of the Gentiles; (that powers of darkness or the gates of hell that should not prevail against it); and although it be on earth, hid as it were out of sight, and seem as if it were forgotten; yet, with respect to that

power and glory that shall be revealed, it shall come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

I know there has been some excellent men, ministers of the gospel, seemed to disagree with this manner of interpreting these or the like passages of scripture, who apply the glory here spoken of to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit in the primitive state of the church, when the Son of God incarnate (God's true tabernacle) came down from heaven, dwelling amongst men. But although this holy city, New Jerusalem, which John saw coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, was the same in substance with the church in the primitive state: yet there are many things spoken of concerning this New Jerusalem which came down from heaven, the which, I am sure, never to this day have had their accomplishment: For this, let us see what John the divine says of this city, *Rev. xxi. 23, 24.* And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof; and the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. Now, when was this accomplished, either in the strict or metaphorical sense? Did ever any of the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour to the church in its primitive state? And who were the nations that walked in the light of it? Except we confine the sense of

the word to a very few out of all nations of the earth; which would be too low and narrow a construction to be applied to such a glorious city as this. Ought not we therefore to conclude, that the glory of this New Jerusalem never yet has been made manifest to the earth; but that it is reserved until the time when the Jews shall be brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles, when the earth shall bring forth in one day, and nations be born at once, as the prophet Isaiah hath spoken with such an air of surprising wonder; Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such a thing? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day, or shall a nation be born at once? *Isai lxvi. 8.*

Others again will have this glorious state of the church to be understood of heaven, the third heaven, where now Christ's glorified body is, and not on earth. If so, Why should it be said, that it came down out of heaven from God? This implies a manifest contradiction that cannot be reconciled with the plain truths of scripture; nor can it be justified by a person endowed with common sense.

Fourthly, The church of the living God is likened in scripture to a kingdom, that is, the kingdom of heaven: see *Matt. xiii. 33. Luke xvii. 20.*

This kingdom is represented as a two-fold kingdom, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of grace is the church militant, or a state of warfare, which is purely spiritual. This kingdom of God cometh not with observation, as it is within men; and there-

fore must be intirely hid from the men of the world, and cannot be said to be of the world; yet, at the same time, it is in the world, as it were travelling in a wilderness, going to the promised land, when the church shall no longer be in the wilderness-state, but from a militant state, be changed into a triumphant; in this kingdom of grace, all the children of God are regenerated, not born after the flesh in this world, but born after the Spirit in that spiritual kingdom of Christ; in this kingdom all the regenerate are made heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; yet are under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the Father, in which they were to inherit all things in the kingdom of glory, which God prepared for them from the foundation of the world; in this kingdom all the saints are qualified and trained up to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; and to be made kings and priests unto God: priests to offer up the sacrifices of praises and thanksgivings, &c. and kings, by virtue of their qualification, by which they are made more than conquerors through him that hath loved them. And here they are prosperous in subduing all their spiritual enemies that war against them; not only that within themselves, considered as the remainder of sin and corruption; but also are invested with power and authority to judge the world, and decide controversy in opinions relating to the peace and tranquillity of the inhabitants of this kingdom; for the

the truly spiritual man judgeth all things; 2 *Cor.* ii. 15.

In this kingdom, we are not to wrestle with flesh and blood, (says the apostle), but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places; *Eph.* vi. 12. And the same apostle elsewhere says, that the weapon of our warfare is not carnal, but mighty, to the pulling down strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and in bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Now, this is that kingdom of God which is said cometh not with observation. But, as I said before, that the kingdom of heaven is a two-fold kingdom; the kingdom of grace, the church militant; so the kingdom of glory is the church triumphant, or a state of peace and rest from excessive labour; and the reward of past good works should amply and liberally be paid them, and crowned with glory and honour, when God will manifest his power, wisdom, goodness, and mercy in their exaltation before all men, even before those that aforetime have hated them, persecuted them, and despitefully used them. In this state, all tears shall be wiped off their faces, and there shall be no more sorrow or crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away, and all things shall be made new.

Now, Christian reader, I hope that I have removed the vail of the sanctuary from before thine eyes, that thou mayest look into the holy of holies; then come with me, and I will shew thee the bride the Lamb's wife.

OF THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

I CORINTHIANS xiii. 13.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

WE find that the apostle, in the twelfth chapter of this epistle to the Corinthians, when after discoursing concerning the mystical body of Christ, to have many members, yet one body; and the several members having diversity of gifts, yet one and the same spirit: and, when speaking of spiritual gifts, he exhorts to covet earnestly the best; and then, (says he) I will shew unto you a more excellent way. Next, he explains what charity is; and shews, that it excels all other gift or gifts whatsoever, and not only excels all other gifts, but that all the other gifts extraordinary bestowed on himself would profit him nothing

nothing without charity. Then he sums up the whole into three heads, of what was essentially necessary as a foundation for the Christian religion: and now, (says he) abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Thus the apostle has laid a foundation, that another might build thereon; and, upon this foundation, I hope, by and by, through divine assistance, to be able to raise a comely edifice.

We find that the apostle, in all his epistles, very much commends order and decency: let all things, says he, be done decently, and in order, *1 Cor. xiv. 40.* And when the same apostle lays down a rule, how to make use of the several gifts bestowed, whether of singing of psalms, or by doctrine, or tongue, revelation or interpretation; let all things be done to edifying; whereby the apostle gives us to understand, that the end, or use of all gifts, is to edify the body of Christ until it should arrive to a state of perfectness: and the manner how this was to be effected, is, by following the rules of order and decency: let all things, says he, be done to edifying. Let all things be done decently, and in order. It is plain, therefore, that nothing can be brought to perfection, without following the rules of decency and order; for confusion is the reverse of order and decency, and oftentimes is attended with strife and envy: and the apostle James testifies, That where envying and strife is,

is, there is confusion, and every evil work;
James iii. 16.

The same rule our Saviour, and all the rest of the apostles observes, and lays before us, both by that compleat form and order of the temple in the law, which was a shadow of the body of Christ, to be distributed to all his members in particular; and this made manifest by the apostles conduct, both by their doctrine, practice, and form of government, and all this in order to edify the mystical body of Christ: Wherefore, says the apostle, and he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, &c. *Eph. iv. 12.*

Now, in the next place, let us take a view of the body politic, and we shall see the beautiful form and order of government there stated by wise and upright rulers, in order to the bringing about a design that seems beneficial to the whole community; so what conduces to the welfare of the superior part of that body, all the members belonging thereunto share of the benefit or loss equal in proportion.

Let us again behold the work of God, in the erect form and order in the body of man, and we shall visibly see with our naked eyes, in one comprehensive view, the very same order and form of government is stated there: we see, that the head, the superior part, is placed above, in order to see and prescribe rules for the feet,
 the

the inferiors, to do their office: and the hands again placed, as it were, in a middle station, in order to be employed, according to their place and office, for the benefit of the whole body.

Again, the most substantial or rational part of man, (the soul) which is truly spiritual and of an immortal substance, though invisible to our bodily eyes; yet, without all doubt, has its own essential parts orderly placed, as well as our bodies, agreeable to the sentiments of sound divines well versed in philosophy, as well as in theological demonstration, that the faculties of the soul of man are possessed of these essential parts, to wit, the understanding, the will, and the affections, the memory, and the conscience.

Now, have we not all the reason in the world to look upon religion in the same light, by viewing what conduces to all its essential properties proportionably and orderly stated in our souls, in order to guide our actions, according to the several characters of the principles of religion held out in the holy scriptures, as this inspired apostle has done, who says, that charity is greater than either faith or hope; and he doth not impose this doctrine upon man, without giving a good reason for it, for he explains himself through the whole chapter. Now, as charity is greater than either faith or hope, it should be exalted as a head for the mystical body; and faith, and hope, ought to be placed as members of that body: this will appear undeniable, if

if we approve of placing the most valuable commodity in its own proper place : for charity, according to the sentiments of the apostle, is the bond of perfectness, or the essence of Christianity ; when summed up in one word, is true love and mercy. Love to God, because he is love, and his mercy endureth for ever : and when this charity takes place, it will surely appear by a man's conduct and regard for the happiness of his neighbours ; the truly charitable well disposed person has a certain pleasure in doing good to the needy, if he should never be rewarded for it, out of respect to the commandments of God ; but he that is void of this charity, all his goodness to his neighbour is, through the hopes some time or other of meeting with a reward merely to make up himself. This charity, the apostle Paul calleth the bond of perfectness, *Col. iii. 14.* and because it is the bond of perfectness, it very justly and properly deserves the name of being called the mother of devotion ; so that this devotion that has charity for its mother, must needs be of the right kind, and cannot fail of bringing forth good fruits.

Now, as morality generally hath always been owned in the church to be a good fruit, when flowing from faith and devout exercise ; and as this morality doth contain in it the due exercise of the cardinal virtues, to wit, prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude ; therefore it should be placed as a main part of the mystical body,
and

and very properly have for its name (rightly stated as above) the mother of the mystical body of Christ, and the main part of Christianity, seeing that here dwells the heart of religion, to wit, a memorial conduct of a good conscience through the exercise of faith and hope proceeding from the heart, as are the will and the affections ; the will and the affections are the members of the mystical body, which are the hands and the feet ; and it is here where the life of faith and hope dwells. Now, the first thing that proceeds from morality, must be hope for a reward to encourage virtue, that so hope might meet with faith, and so both be united ; and hope, which is grafted in morality, might be united to faith. Now faith is the principal part of the arm, which is a persuasion or giving credit to the truths of revelation : and so faith, which is united to hope, might be grafted to the throne of grace ; then the graces of the Spirit are united to the throne of grace, and with these graces of the Spirit, there are members placed with a Mediator, to over-rule the fingers in the hand of the mystical body, in order to embrace and lay hold on the desired object. Thus much for the government of the will.

The next part of the body that descends downward from the main part of the body, must be perfect obedience to the precepts of the moral law ; and that is, the satisfaction of the surety of the covenant of grace : and this satisfaction of the surety, is the root or seat of the body, and from
the

the root descend solemn ordinances *, the offspring of the seat: and these solemn ordinances are united to the solemn league and covenants, by virtue of the covenant of grace; and these solemn leagues and covenants are the pillars on which the body stands, as it is united to the covenant of grace, and it is by virtue of the covenants the whole body walks at liberty. Then the throne of assembly is grafted to the solemn league, and in this throne of assembly are members placed with a moderator, and it is on this throne of assembly the whole body is made to walk straight. Thus much for the government of the affections.

Now these are the most essential parts of the members of the mystical body; and, when joined together, produce the body of faith, and morality, the body of hope. Now here are faith and hope bodily.

The next principal part of the body is the head, which is charity, the mother of devotion, and the head is the chief ornament of the body; and because it is the chief ornament of the body, it must be set on high above the hill of honour and preferment. Now this hill is Mount Zion, through which there is an invisible passage by which the body, from time to time, (as need requires, is supplied with fresh provision from the head to the main part of the body) there to be digested thoroughly for the nourishment of the

* The preaching of the word, and sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper.

whole body: and whatever meats or doctrines of any kind that may enter in at the mouth of this body, whether it be deemed clean, or unclean, it cannot defile the body, inasmuch as it enters not into the heart to defile the conscience, but the refuse cast out unto the draught for the purging all meats *. Now, as I said, that the head is the chief ornament of the body, why? because it is before the head all causes are brought to be tried and judged by the understanding.

Now, the spouse hath cast off her sackcloth, and has put on her beautiful garments cloathed with the sun, that is, with the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ: it remains now that the vail should also be taken off her face, that her comely countenance should be made manifest. Now, her senses are employed in the enjoyment of the reality there is in religion, to wit, the hearing, and the sight, the smell, and the taste.

Being now justified, redeemed, and sanctified; justified by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit; the marks of which are sealed on her forehead; for, it is through the gate of justification the joyful sound of the

* What I have here related as above, is not to countenance every wind of doctrine; but that all such matters should be thoroughly weighed and perused, before a just man can pass his opinion upon it, (as it is wicked to censure any cause before it is laid before an impartial judge; so it is an excellent principle in any man to be ready, upon every occasion, at first, to put the most favourable construction on such matter) until the contrary aspect appear.

glad tidings of peace and reconciliation sounded in her ears, by which her pardon was sealed by the Father of mercy, through the merits of his beloved Son; and it is by the gate of redeeming love, her eyes doth behold with wonder the treasure of wisdom and knowledge, and all the benefits of redemption purchased by Christ, laid up in him, and ready to be made manifest in due time; and it is through the gate of sanctification all the members of the mystical body are purified and cleansed, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, in order to dispose them to enjoy the pleasure of heaven; and it is through the gate of complete redemption, (which is the mouth of the body) the whole mystical body is nourished and cherished, and is thereby made fat and fair; as also, are made to sit at peace and redeemed from all the slavery and bondage of tyranny.

O! How does the rosy cheeks of this lovely bride now shine, with the assurance of God's love and eternal life? and, how doth her sweet lips move in talking of the language of heaven, and of the New Jerusalem, (and her tongue in her mouth) with praises and thanksgiving? And, how does her agreeable chin favour a night-thought to contemplate on God's works; as also, how her extensive knowledge, (the teeth in her mouth) chew the cud of heavenly meditation? Behold, she is all fair, there is no spot on her!

Now,

THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 245

Now, it is manifest, that the mystical body of Christ is a perfect and a compleat body, without any deformity, or superfluity of naughtiness; but is conformed to the real image of Christ; and it must needs be so, seeing it is Christ's fulness. There is nothing of this body seen in it of human invention; and yet it is a complete body; for it hath a head, a main part, and members in proportion; and all but one holy catholic or universal church.

It remaineth now, that I should enquire into the character of the Roman catholic church, because she stileth herself the holy catholic church. But the church of Rome's name and character has been revealed long before she could have a visible being in the world; for John the apostle, who wrote the Revelations, (at that time) declares, that upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth, *Rev. xvii. 5.*

Now, it is evident, that the apostle here means the Roman Catholic Church; first, because he makes her residence to be in the city of Rome; and this he shews by his sight in the wilderness, where he was carried away in the Spirit, and saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured * beast full of names of blasphemy, which represents the Ro-

* Signifying a persecuting spirit.

246 THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN CHURCH

man empire ; the beast upon whom the woman sat, means the Roman empire, who blasphemed God, by establishing laws against God, and against his tabernacle, and them that dwell therein ; and it is very plain, that the woman who sat upon this beast is to be understood the church of Rome in her splendour and magnitude, as appears from what follows, *Rev. xvii. 4.* And the woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abomination and filthiness of her fornication. And accordingly, the apostle gives us to understand, (as he was told by an angel) that the woman which he saw is that great city * which reigneth over the kings of the earth, which cannot be applied to any other city but Rome only.

I shall now examine into the nature of that doctrine, by which the form and order of that church doth place her whole reliance upon ; and this I shall endeavour to make plain in viewing of the following particulars.

First, With respect to her head ; 2dly, With respect to her house ; 3dly, With respect to her strength ; 4thly, With respect to the government of her members.

In the first place, If any should ask or desire to know, if the church of Rome hath a head, I answer, yes ; but it shall be cut off. Why so ? Because it is not founded on Christ's mystical body ;

* See *Rev. xvii. 18.*

therefore

THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 247

therefore it is the head of a harlot. How does it appear that it is not founded upon Christ's mystical body? Because the inspired apostle Paul gives us to understand, that charity is the greatest part of religion and the bond of perfectness; and it is made manifest as a truth that cannot be denied, that charity is the mother of devotion; and yet the Roman catholic church makes ignorance the mother of devotion. How this agrees to the declaration of the apostle, I leave it to any one of reason to judge; if ignorance be the mother of devotion, as the Romish clergy confess it to be, then the pope of Rome, who professes himself a parent to devotion, must be very ignorant in the knowledge of the holy scriptures; and if so, he surely is a blind leader of the people: and if the blind lead the blind, (says our blessed Saviour) shall they not both fall into the ditch? *Luke vi. 39.* Every man of reason must confess, that blind zeal is a parent to superstitious and ungoverned principles. And what must the produce of that be, but a nursery for errors, debate, deceit, falshood, &c. What warrant hath the pope of Rome to appropriate the title of being the vicar of Christ, and to be called his holiness, when, at the same time, he doth not take care to separate the vessels of the sanctuary from the prophane: or, which is much the same, not careful of preserving the truths of Christ revealed in his word, from being mixed with the pollutions of superstitious and erroneous principles? Doth not the pope of Rome exalt himself above

248 THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

the scriptures, which is the word of God, by establishing laws and ordinances without the least warrant for it in scripture ; yea, contrary to express commands ? and is not this opposing Christ, and exalting himself against God ? therefore the pope of Rome is anti-christ, that man of sin who was to be revealed in his time, as the apostle says, Who opposeth and exalteth himself against, and above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he is God sitting in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things, and now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time, for the mystery of iniquity doth already work ; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way ; and then shall that wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall be destroyed by the brightness of his coming, &c. *2 Thess. ii.*

In the second place, If any desire to know, if the church of Rome hath a house ? I answer, yea ; but it is founded on the sand, and therefore it must fall.

Q. How can it be proved that it is founded on the sand ?

A. It will appear by plain and undeniable evidence, founded both upon reason and scripture ; and, in order to make this clear, I shall consider the grounds by which this church claims her authority in respect to the foundation on which her infallibility

THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 249

infallibility is secured. As to the foundation itself, it cannot be Jesus Christ, as the apostle says, For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ, *1 Cor. iii. 11.*

Now, we shall soon see, whether the church of Rome hath her foundation on Christ, who is the rock of truth; or upon the sand of errors and falshood. I have already made it appear, that Christ is a perfect Saviour, that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him; and therefore his sacred word, which we have on record in the books of the Old and New Testaments, is a perfect rule both for faith and manners, in order to come unto God by Jesus Christ, and is of itself, through the Spirit, sufficient to make a perfect Christian. Nothing must be added thereunto, (as a standing rule of faith;) nothing must be diminished therefrom, upon pain of incurring God's dreadful displeasure, in bringing upon ourselves swift destruction by the plagues that are written in this book.

But the church of Rome hath made the commandments of God of non-effect through her traditions, as it is already proved by the joint testimony and declarations of protestant churches; therefore the church of Rome is founded on the sand of errors; that is, on the defection of St Peter, who denied his Lord. Peter denied Christ; so doth the church of Rome, who denieth him, a perfect Saviour. Peter mistrusted the all-sufficiency of Christ when he mistrusted his all-sufficiency to secure him in time of

250 THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

trial; so doth the church of Rome deny Christ's all-sufficiency to save unto the uttermost; and therefore must do more good works than what is required from the word of God; and this is a doctrine approved of and maintained in the church of Rome's own confession of faith, by the works of superogation, which is expressly contrary to plain and undeniable passages of scripture; for, instead of doing more than our duty, our Saviour told his disciples, that without him they could do nothing, even of their duty, and far less could it be thought they could do more than what was required. And after they have done all that was commanded them, through his assistance, to say they were unprofitable servants, *John xv. 5. Luke xvii. 10.* And doth not this doctrine of works of supererogation, deny Christ's ability to save to the uttermost, and consequently deny openly the holy scriptures, as a perfect rule, in order to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, *2 Tim. iii. 17.* Surely it is plainly seen, that the church of Rome makes Christ but half a Saviour, and his mystical body deaf, blind, and lame: but the true catholic church is founded on the rock of defence; that is, the all-sufficiency of the Mediator, who is the only rock of defence; and this rock of defence is spoken of by David, after he was sensible of his own weakness and imperfection, to merit any thing at the hand of God; and by faith in the Messiah, viewing the scheme of free grace,

THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 251

grace, and pardoning mercy, often times crying out to God, Thou art, (says he) my shield, my buckler, my high tower, and the horn of my salvation: and again he says, Let me not be put to shame, for I put my trust and confidence in thee. And when Christ putteth that question to his disciples, by saying, What do men say, that I (the son of man) am? and they said, that some said he was Elias, some Jeremiah, or one of the prophets: but he said unto them, Whom do ye say that I am? and Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven; and I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell should not prevail against it. This rock, What is this rock? It is the rock of truth and righteousness, stronger than all the rocks that ever was or can be, which can be nothing else but Christ himself, who is the sun of righteousness and the rock of salvation; for Christ says, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away, *Matt. xxiv. 35.*

OBJECTION. If Christ had not a design of making Peter the apostle the supreme pastor of having the care of feeding his flock, in the giving him a superiority in place, with the respect to the government of the church, Why should

Christ be so remarkable in telling Peter to feed his sheep and to feed his lambs: and when he was converted, to strengthen his brethren, as also in giving him a new name, such as calling him Peter, and elsewhere Cephas, which is to say, a stone or a rock?

To this I answer, If it could be made to appear, by the apostle Peter's own epistles, which he wrote as a part of the sacred records, or by any of the other apostle's writings, that Peter actually was invested with any superior degree relating to the government of the church in his time, there should be no occasion of dispute about the matter. But since there are no such things to be found in the writings of all the apostles, that Peter was stated with a superior degree above the rest of the apostles, with respect to the government of the church; we are therefore bound, both by reason and scripture, to believe, that what Christ said to Peter, he said unto all the rest of the apostles, for they were all called and chosen of God, equally eminent as the apostles of Jesus Christ.

Obj. But Peter was favoured with a distinguishing blessing for his public confession, by Christ's saying to Peter, Blessed art thou Simon, &c. To this I answer, Peter's confession was so remarkable, (as is said) that flesh and blood did not, or could not reveal it; he had it not of men, nor of his own reason, or any human understanding; and therefore he had the less cause to boast of any

THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 253

any excellency in himself; yet, upon the account of the confession itself, Peter indeed was blessed, remarkably blessed, no doubt, with a more large measure of the blessed Spirit, and a more free communion and fellowship with his Lord and Master. But, more particularly, this confession of Peter was true; true to the utmost extent of what the meaning of the word could bear; the eternal Son, of the eternal Father, the sent and promised Messiah, the Christ of God, now tabernacled amongst men, veiled with flesh and human infirmities: this is the real truth, a strong rock, and upon this rock Christ would build his church, and the gates of hell should not prevail against it. No; not all the storms of the wicked and ungodly put together, nor all the deceitful works of darkness, nor the subtlety of Satan shall ever prevail against the church of Christ, because it is founded on the rock of salvation.

Now it is manifest, that the church of Rome has nothing to rest upon for a foundation, but the sand of errors and delusion, vain imagination maintained by falsehoods; and therefore, in the day of God's fearful anger she must fall, and great will be the fall thereof.

In the third place, I am to inquire, If the church of Rome hath hands? I answer, yes; she hath hands also; but they shall likewise be cut off. Why so? Because they are not of the members of Christ's mystical body, but are the members of a harlot.

How can that be made to appear? First, It appears

254 THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

appears by her own principle, which is contrary to that of the members of Christ's mystical body, wherein they maintain a multitude of advocates and intercessors, as praying to the Virgin Mary, and some of the apostles, particularly Paul, to pray for them; and that such and such persons of theirs might be delivered out of purgatory; and many such ridiculous and abominable practices, of which there are not the least warrant for in the word of God. But rather contrary thereto; the word of God expressly holds out, that there is but one Mediator between God and man, and that one Mediator is the man Christ Jesus; *1 Tim. ii. 5.* And what doth this monstrous whore mean, to cause her members to bow, and give homage to the dead images, out of respect to the persons, as if they knew that they heard them? And supposing they could hear them, I am sure they do not know whether they be willing, or in a capacity to help them out of purgatory, or afford them any manner of relief. It is plain, therefore, that the church of Rome is that mother of harlots, who commits fornication with both head and members.

And, in the fourth and last place, I conclude with asking, If the church of Rome has feet? I answer, yes; but they are already partly cut off. This is come to pass by the extirpation of the Jesuits in France and Portugal, who, within these few years, remarkably have suffered for their former wickedness. All Europe are sensible that these Jesuits have always been remarkably zealous
for

THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 255

for the interest of the church of Rome, for which they wonderfully distinguished themselves as chief pillars and main supporters of their mother-church, by making use of every opportunity to divest senators of their lawful authority, that they might have the power of government in their own hands, to strengthen themselves in their villainy. How swift did their feet go about wherever they had any power given them, contriving how to deprive people of their rights and properties, in order to make up themselves? and what great pains they have been at in lurking and jumping to every corner wherever they expected to meet with their booty, and for fear of their own Babel falling? How many thousand Protestants have been massacred through their means, as most part of the places where they have been scheming, particularly in the kingdom of Ireland, can be witness to? And so much for the church of Rome; such sort of feet, such hands and heads, for they have joined together in crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh again, and has put him to an open shame. And now, woe be to her that is filthy and polluted, for her judgment cometh as a whirlwind: for what holiness or beauty is to be seen belonging to her now, for all her former comeliness is corrupted, and now must come down to the grave with her? Come and see where she is as a dead lump, lying in the grave of sin and corruption, consumed with worms; and like a whited sepulchre, fair on the outside, but within are all filthiness and rottenness, uncleanness, and dead men's bones.

256 THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

I should have endeavoured to compose an hymn for this, or had chosen one ready to my hand from the collection performed by the most celebrated authors that are now in vogue, but finding none has, or can be done more to the purpose, than what has been pen'd above two thousand years ago by the Royal Psalmist, when he by the Spirit of God foresaw and spoke of that excellent glory of the Messiah's kingdom on earth, as we have it in the 149th Psalm. I chose the Scotch metre for this, though that generally is least esteemed in England; yet prefer it, because I found the same to be more plain and agreeable to the text, than any that I have yet seen.

Praise ye the Lord, unto him sing

A new song, and his praise

In the assembly of his saints,

In sweet psalms do ye raise :

Let Isr'el in his Maker joy,

And to him praises sing;

Let all that Zion's children are,

Be joyful in their King.

O let them unto his great name

Give praises in the dance;

Let them with timbrel and with harp,

In songs his praise advance :

For God doth pleasure take in those

That his own people be,

And he with his salvation

The meek will beautify.

And

THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 257

And in his glory excellent

Let all his saints rejoice,

Let them to him upon their beds

Aloud lift up their voice :

Let in their mouth aloft be rais'd

The high praise of the Lord ;

And let them have in their right hand

A sharp two-edged sword :

To execute the vengeance due

Upon the heathen all,

And make deserved punishment

Upon the people fall :

And e'en with chains, as pris'ners bind

Their kings that them command,

Yea, and with iron fetters strong,

The nobles of the land.

On them the judgment to perform,

Found written in his word ;

This honour is to all his saints,

O do ye praise the Lord !

F I N I S.

And in his glory excellent
 Like all his former triumphs
 Let them to him upon their beds
 Around lift up their voices
 And in their mouths shall be raised
 The high praise of the Lord
 And let their hands their right hands
 A double two-edged sword

And execute the vengeance due
 Upon the wicked
 And make a nation of conquerors
 Up in the world's fall

And in their hands as the sea bind
 Their knees in their own hands
 And with their own hands strong
 The nobles of the land

On them the judgment to perform
 The found written in a word
 All the nations are to be
 O how ye praise the Lord

DE 61

And in his glory excellent
 Like all his former triumphs
 Let them to him upon their beds
 Around lift up their voices
 And in their mouths shall be raised
 The high praise of the Lord
 And let their hands their right hands
 A double two-edged sword
 And execute the vengeance due
 Upon the wicked
 And make a nation of conquerors
 Up in the world's fall
 And in their hands as the sea bind
 Their knees in their own hands
 And with their own hands strong
 The nobles of the land
 On them the judgment to perform
 The found written in a word
 All the nations are to be
 O how ye praise the Lord

C A T A L O G U E

OF

B O O K S.

THE Author of this work desires to acquaint those of his Christian brethren as are not in a capacity to purchase books of any considerable size, that there has been several small pieces, belonging to the same work, published by him some years ago, that can easily be purchased.

I. A View of the Glory of the Messiah's Kingdom, conjunct with two other Treatises, viz. 1st. A short Account of an extraordinary Revelation, and other Things remarkable in the course of God's dealing with the Author. Also, A Discourse on Original Sin, in two Parts: To which is prefixed, An Address to the Friendly Society of Gardeners. 1763.

II. Remarks on the Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies, on a new Plan; wherein is shewn the Mystical Sense and true Interpretation of the Sixth and Seventh Vials, in the Revelation, demonstrated by infallible Testimonies, drawn from the general current of the Light of Scripture and Political Observations. To which is prefixed, A short Treatise holding forth the Necessity

C A T A L O G U E.

cessity and Duty of all Men, from the highest to the lowest, living in a Christian Country, carefully and diligently to peruse the Holy Scriptures in order to become true Christians. Also an Address to the Protestant Dissenting Ministers in and about London.

III. A Practical Treatise on Regeneration, or the New Birth, wherein are shewn several mistaken Notions that have risen of late Years concerning the Doctrine of Regeneration. 1764.

IV. The Mystery of God opened concerning the Holy Catholic Church, wherein are held forth the Glory of the Sanctuary and the Vial, between the Holy and the Most Holy Place removed, in order to look into the Holy of Holies. To which is prefixed, An Address to the Reverend Divines of the Church of Scotland. Edinburgh. 1768.

V. Emblematical Representation of the Paradise of God, shewing the Nature of Spiritual Industry in the Similitude of a Garden well ordered, dressed, and kept, with sundry Reflections on the Nature of Divine Knowledge. To which is added, A Treatise on the Righteousness of Saints, as is recorded in Scripture, delivered by way of an Answer to a Letter from a Correspondent. 1779. 7 DE61

Sold by G. Keith, in Grace-church-Street; Alex. Hogg, No. 16, Pater-noster-Row; and J. Mathews, No. 18, in the Strand.

o
s
n
n
r
r
e
n
n
o
h
.
.
.
s
n
f
y
.
s
.